

**TEACHING AND LEARNING AT EVERGREEN:
an ethnographic study**

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Assessment Study Group

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CHAPTER I.

FOCUS, ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY

Stories and storytelling are central to this report. In fact, much of this document can be viewed as a multilayered collection of storytelling performances. This is because there are a number of individual voices, most of them Evergreen voices, that make up the distinctive, nontraditional "chorus" which follows.

Before proceeding, I would like to introduce some of the key voices in this assemblage of individual storytellers. In the beginning, there were those administrators, faculty and students who struggled to tell Evergreen's story to college insiders through a number of reports and to outsiders via the college catalog and other promotional literature. Then came the Assessment Study Group. They wrestled with finding and telling Evergreen's story for assessment purposes. This is where I came in. Members of the Assessment Study Group asked me, an organizational ethnographer and folklorist, to study the college's teaching and learning culture and report on it from my outsider's perspective. Because of their needs and interests, I chose to focus my ethnographic study of the school on the "Evergreen experience" stories of its members. As a result, there are included here numerous stories of the individual Evergreen experience which I gathered from students, faculty and staff during the one year I spent researching the college.

To this plethora of Evergreen voices was added one other: mine. From examining the individual stories of these tale-tellers, I observed an underlying cultural web that not only unites them, but finds in them a larger, communal meaning. The ways in which this hidden cultural web supports and/or thwarts individual student's and faculty member's movement through Evergreen is the metastory that I will now tell in this report.

In pursuit of Evergreen's story:

"Think of a college that is creative in everything it does, from your first freshman seminar to your senior project." So begins a colorful brochure that is routinely sent to prospective student applicants to The Evergreen State College. It continues, "Think of a learning community whose doors are wide open to a diversity of cultures, ages, backgrounds and ideas." In subsequent paragraphs, this same pamphlet characterizes the college's educational philosophy as "flexible but intense," its faculty as "highly creative," and its basic working style as collaborative. It suggests that these factors contribute to a kind of "electricity" that "pulses through" the classroom and campus life in general. The result of this innovative approach to running a college is said to be "a dazzling array of events and happenings," many of which are student-initiated and spontaneous. In closing, the booklet dramatically communicates a value that is portrayed as being central to Evergreen's culture. "What Evergreen is, is you. First, last and foremost, we're interested in you the student." This brochure creates an image of personal discovery, portrays a way of doing things that facilitates self-expression, and conveys a feeling of excitement stemming from participation in this unique learning process.

Unlike the above pamphlet which is aimed at outsiders, community members also articulate and reflect on their aspirations, visions, values and ways of doing things through publications intended for an in-house audience. A case in point is a recent self-study report. Entitled Constancy and Change, this self-assessment was done in 1989. As is the case with the promotional literature, this document describes, celebrates and critiques Evergreen's distinctive approach to liberal arts education. It, too, strives to convey the insider's impression that the college is "creative in everything it does." In referring to its role-and-mission statement, for example, the assertion is made that it "may be among the most unusual role and-mission statements in the nation, if not in the history of American higher education" (Constancy and Change, p. 4). The actual statement itself is equally enthusiastic about the institution's perceived uniquenesses and strengths with regard to its mission. "Evergreen's fundamental mission is to assist students in learning how to learn and how to continue developing their skills in a world of increasing diversity, interdependence, and moral complexity."

A similar level of conviction in and enthusiasm for its approach is communicated with regard to the educational outcomes it strives to produce for its students.

Evergreen strives to produce graduates who are distinguished by their ability to communicate, by their self-reliance as learners and researchers, by their ability to conceptualize and to solve problems, by their comfort with diversity and complexity, and by their commitment to personal integrity and the public good.

This insider's view of the college can also be discerned in the institution's statement about what it attempts to do and how it goes about trying to do it. According to the role-and-mission statement, the college approaches this task with the usual "tools of a traditional college: the disciplines of the humanities, arts, the natural sciences and the social sciences". Once imported to Evergreen, however, these disciplines are said to be "transformed" into something special. They become meaningful "teaching and learning experiences." What insiders believe makes them special are the following animating characteristics: 1) the creation of vital "interdisciplinary learning communities" where faculty and students collaborate in a common goal to 2) "bridging theory with practice" in such a way as to foster 3) the "active involvement of students" in 4) "a campus environment which celebrates diversity as a resource for learning."

Are the images of teaching and learning described in the above in-house literature reflective of campus reality as students and faculty experience it on a daily basis? Or is this view of an Evergreen education an expression of a timeworn institutional mythology that is out of touch with what students and faculty are doing, thinking and feeling? These are the sorts of questions and concerns that led members of the Assessment Study Group to call for an ethnographic study of teaching and learning at Evergreen.

Origins of the study:

In response to proposed statewide standardized testing of student outcomes at all public institutions of higher education, Evergreen and other public schools began to explore alternative means of assessment. One of the central goals that emerged from discussions

along these lines was to devise ways of doing assessment that took into consideration each institution's own individual mission, populations and organizational culture. Evergreen's answer to this problem was to form the Assessment Study Group. Motivated to figure out how to do assessment in a way that would be both reflective of its unusual approach and beneficial to members' own needs for information and increased understanding of what they do and how well they do it, the Assessment Study Group restated the five goals enumerated in the 1984 Self-Study Report, and added a sixth encompassing skill development. These were tagged because members believed them to be central to the college's teaching and learning mission. These six elements are described as follows:

1. To study interdisciplinary themes.
2. To develop the capacity to judge, speak and act on the basis of reasoned personal beliefs, understandings and commitments.
3. To link theory with practice.
4. To create and share work within cooperative, non-competitive contexts with mutual respect for diversity of perspectives, abilities and experiences.
5. To develop a capacity to elucidate and appreciate differences of culture and gender in order to live in an increasingly diverse world.
6. To continue to develop reading, writing, computation, critical thinking, speaking, listening, and computer skills.

Charged with the belief that Evergreen has something special going for it in the higher education process, members of the Assessment Study Group tried to identify what factors make an Evergreen education "something special." One likely path to this information, it was decided, would be the narrative evaluations contained in students' academic transcripts. Reflecting on their reasoning for pursuing this path, members of the Study Group mused that, "It seemed appropriate to look [in the transcripts] for a description of what we do."

From the transcripts, Study Group members hoped to discover what it was about Evergreen's teaching and learning culture that students felt had been important to their experience here. Instead, they found that students generally took many of the unique aspects of an Evergreen-style education for granted. This included the fact that they, the students, were evaluated in a nongraded, noncompetitive narrative format that allowed them to evaluate their own work and that of their faculty (who similarly evaluated both themselves and their students) through oral and written communications!

This preliminary finding initially led Study Group members to question the validity of the widely held assumption among Evergreen faculty and staff that the narrative evaluation process is a central element of the teaching and learning culture at the college. "It's possible that the actual transcript (in particular the evaluations and especially the student self-evaluation) may be of no more direct value in assessment than say, burning incense or performing magical incantations over the student."

Members acknowledged that, rather than the actual experience of writing the evaluations themselves, the central animating characteristic might be located elsewhere in the evaluation process. "Perhaps more importantly, it's the culture created by the knowledge that students and faculty will write narrative evaluations or perhaps it's the sheer absence of grades."

Unwilling to be stymied by the seemingly contradictory information they gleaned from their initial readings of the transcripts, Assessment Study Group members called for an ethnographic study of teaching and learning at Evergreen, along with several other studies. The goal of this ethnographic study was to elicit an outside perspective on the education process that goes on here. "We would like to invite a team of cultural anthropologists to campus to observe and report on the teaching and learning culture at Evergreen," said Study Group members in a preliminary discussion of the project. The rationale for this ambitious research project was explained in the following way:

This external assessment of what animates the educational experience at Evergreen would serve as a measurement against which to compare the results of what we say occurs at Evergreen [via a video documentary], what appears in a formal document intended to describe an undergraduate education at Evergreen for external audiences (narrative transcripts), and what our current students and alumni tell us (survey work).

From four members of the group who were particularly interested in making this outsider-conducted ethnography happen, new twists on the basic idea began to evolve. For instance, the motivation for conducting the study was articulated more clearly:

We realized that an (outside) ethnographer might have insights into Evergreen's educational system that we simply couldn't imagine. The richness and complexity of the data generated by an ethnographic study as well as the multiplicity of perspectives possible in such a study convinced us of the need for such a study.

Members' thinking on the ways in which the study might be conducted also evolved considerably. Instead of a blanket calling for "a team of cultural anthropologists" to come and study the culture of the college, several possible scenarios were envisioned. Some of these were contingent on finding external sources of funding. They ranged from a "dream" scenario dubbed the "Cadillac" approach to a "bare bones" minimum called the "bicycle" approach. Regardless of the project format that might be adopted, it was clear about what they wanted the ethnographer(s) to do: inquire into "how the culture we create at Evergreen supports or undermines our six goals."

Study Group members also came to terms with how to deal with the outsider(s) who would conduct this study. Their stance on this topic may be characterized as supportive but somewhat "laissez-faire". "We emphasize that it is impossible to predict what areas of the Evergreen culture these people might explore and that we should not want to influence their direction beyond a thorough introduction to our six goals."

Finally, Assessment Study Group members speculated on the possible findings of an ethnographic assessment of the teaching and learning culture of the college. On the one hand, they suspected that it was "possible, in fact probable, that expert observers not con-

nected with the college will note fundamental characteristics which we overlook because we are too close to the subject." A second possibility that they entertained was that "expert observers will discover that 'the emperor has no clothes' with regard to some characteristics we will put forth in an internally generated study." The last scenario that members identified was that "correspondence between the findings of expert external observers and our own findings will serve to validate our work".

Doing ethnography at Evergreen:

There are many different definitions of what constitutes "ethnography." According to one well-known cultural anthropologist, ethnography is "the work of describing a culture" (Spradley, 1980: 3). Another researcher, a folklorist, declares that "the word 'ethnography' literally means 'portrayal of a people'" (Jones, Moore and Snyder, 1988: 27). Bronislaw Malinowski, one of the founders of modern ethnography, emphasized in 1922 that the goal of the enterprise as he envisioned it was "to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of his world".

A more contemporary characterization of ethnography that is focused on applying this method to the study of organizational culture notes that,

Ethnography brings to light the values and ways of doing things in an organization long taken for granted by members. Seldom written down or consciously examined, these precepts and practices guide people's actions, inform decision making, and aid or hinder organizational effectiveness (Jones et al, eds., 1988: 27).

In other words, the goal of an ethnography is to capture the "feel" of a culture from the "inside out." Instead of applying external research instruments to a setting, ethnographic methods allow researchers to explore a culture from the "native's point of view." How do ethnographers accomplish such a task? They learn about a cultural milieu by interviewing and observing those who directly participate in and are affected by the culture's symbols, patterns and ways of doing things. This is how I have proceeded at Evergreen.

Understanding teaching and learning through stories:

One way to learn about the culture of an institution is through the stories its members tell. This is the approach that was especially interesting to members of the Assessment Study Group. Because of this, I set out to gather for them stories of teaching and learning experiences from students, faculty and staff at Evergreen. In fact, I spent much of the 1990-91 academic year interviewing community members in order to collect their "personal experience" narratives (Stahl, 1977). The outcome of this data-gathering effort is more than 150 interviews, many of which are tape-recorded. From these came the several hundred "Greener" experiences [accounts and reflections] that are the primary data source presented in this report.

After collecting narratives of people's personal experiences, I turned to analyze them. It was at this point that I began to see some unifying cultural patterns emerge. For example, through their storytelling, people reported a progression of four different kinds of experience as they moved through the teaching and learning environment at Evergreen. Beyond this, they perceived that certain institutional traditions, practices and ways of doing things had supported their efforts on campus, whereas others had either a minimal or negative impact.

These insights led me to see a larger metastory in the narrative data. The metastory I ultimately found is one in which members portray their significant Evergreen experiences as occurring in four sequential "experience scenarios." Both students and faculty peg their significant Evergreen experience as starting with their discovery of the college. Because of this, I have dubbed the initial experience a scenario of Discovery. A prevalent characteristic of these discovery stories is the creation of a romanticized image of everyday life at the school.

The second experience scenario that students and faculty depict through their storytelling is that of Initiation. This includes being initiated into the college's teaching and learning culture through a variety of experiences. Because they either confirm or invalidate newcomers' typically idealized images of the college, these experiences seem to function as rites of passage in their accounts.

The third phase of student and faculty experience at Evergreen, Participation, differs significantly from the previous two. By this point in their Evergreen careers, members have become grounded in Evergreen's teaching and learning culture. As a result, they have more or less accepted the college's limitations, and have found a niche for themselves by figuring out how they can fit into the academic scheme of things.

In the fourth experience phase, student and faculty stories for the first time reveal two different experience scenarios. According to the students I interviewed, Separation is the dominant theme that characterizes their concluding experience scenario at the college. This begins when students realize that graduation is approaching and that this event will mean a major change in their lives. Once this realization set in, the students I met were consumed with figuring out what they had accomplished here and what it meant to them. In addition, they were also preoccupied with articulating a path for themselves once they left the college.

Faculty, on the other hand, principally tell of their Continuation experience at Evergreen. They talk about finding a personal sense of direction and figuring out how to work together in a small, interdisciplinary community.

There is also a second part to this metastory. This, too, can be further broken down into two substories. (1) After experiencing these four scenarios (discovery, initiation, participation and separation or continuation), many students and faculty express a positive outlook on their experience here. They talk of feeling transformed, and attribute this feeling to having found their respective voices. This discovery they then attribute to the encouragement they received from what they perceive to be a variety of supportive traditions, practices and ways of doing things that make up Evergreen's distinctive teaching and learning culture. (2) Some students and faculty point out that Evergreen's culture also has a downside. This outlook emphasizes that the supportive, idealistic rhetoric of official college culture is often just that: rhetoric. They report that in their experience the positive image portrayed in the official

college mythology is not necessarily reflected in everyday reality as they have come to know it.

Along with the narratives which express the Evergreen experience of community members (the principal source of data in this report), there are two other sources of information. First, there are my observations of faculty and students as they engaged in a variety of teaching and learning activities (e.g., lecturing, seminarizing, studying in small groups, evaluating, participating in field trips, etc.) which took place in a number of settings (e.g., in classrooms, the dorms, off campus, etc.). In addition to observing others' involvements in everyday life at the college, I was also a witness to my own experiences as a participant in Evergreen culture. Despite limitations in time and space which have forced me to rely principally on the stories, my observations and participation also figure prominently if not quite so dramatically. In fact, they play two important roles in this report. They are the basis for a chapter (Chapter VII). These observations of self and others have also contributed additional context to my investigation. As a result, I have been able to triangulate my findings more thoroughly. A second benefit is that my selection, ordering and interpretation of the stories has been made more reliable.

Organization of the report:

The organization of this report reflects my data-gathering methods, the settings I explored, the actors I spoke with, and the kinds of experiences I had, in addition to the interpretations I have made of all of these constituent parts. It also reflects a different approach to the study of institutional culture and assessment, one in which the focus is on the expressive and symbolic behavior of participants as they are engaged in teaching and learning.

Chapter I is an overview of the setting, problem for research, research methodology, and findings. Chapters II through VI reveal the patterning of student and faculty experience over the course of their respective careers via the stories they tell. These chapters describe sequential phases or scenarios of participant experience in members' own words. The four experience scenarios include: Discovery (Chapter II), Initiation (Chapter III), Student Participation (Chapter IV), and Faculty Participation (Chapter V). Chapter VI deals with Student Separation and Faculty Continuation, the final experience scenarios of both groups.

In Chapter VII, I present selected observational data. Much of this information consists of detailed descriptions of particular settings and the impact they have on members. Several cultural patterns and themes are highlighted here. This chapter may be thought of as my telling of my own story, what I have seen as well as what I have personally experienced.

In Chapter VIII, the various themes, patterns and traditions that I have described throughout the report become integrated. This is accomplished by identifying and discussing a number of cultural variables that emerged from the symbolic study of Evergreen's educational approach.

A note on format:

There are two further aspects in my presentation of this report which are unusual and therefore in need of explanation. The first has to do with thoroughness. Throughout this document, I have tried to include at least one narrative of every type of Evergreen experience that I uncovered in my research here. Where it added to the completeness and potential usefulness of the report, I have taken the liberty of including more than one example.

In some instances, this plethora of stories and observations made more than one interpretation of the data possible. While I have made my own conclusions evident, I have not attempted to limit the data set so as to make it rigidly conform to a single interpretation. I have taken this approach because I believe it to be in the best interest of the Assessment Study Group, my client, as well as of other parties who may be interested in this research. Instead of asking them to rely on a single "expert view" of Evergreen's teaching and learning culture, I would rather present "Greeners" with the opportunity to also be able to come to their own conclusions. Hopefully, this "action research" approach will make the report more useful.

Along with making it useful, I have also tried to make this report accessible. I have done this in two ways. For instance, in the primary data chapters, Chapters II through VI, I have devoted one-half or more of each page to narratives of participants' experiences. The remaining space has been given over to background information and to interpretive comments. In addition, I have adopted a terse presentational style that falls between a standard academic narrative, on the one hand, and a detailed outline, on the other. This is evident in the frequent use of paired pound signs (##) throughout the report. These signify the break between stories from different interviewees.

CHAPTER II.

STORIES AND REFLECTIONS ON THE FIRST EXPERIENCE PHASE: DISCOVERY

Generally dissatisfied with their previous experiences in conventional educational institutions, students and faculty often portray their discovery of Evergreen as one of the most (if not the most) exciting and meaningful events in their academic careers. For the most part, the discovery of Evergreen is presented as a change in direction that is serendipitous. Discovery stories abound which depict an individual finding Evergreen and then wanting to come here to escape what is perceived to be an dissatisfying situation. In many cases, the situation from which the prospective Greener is attempting to escape is a mainstream educational institution. Such places are clearly felt to be stifling to applicants who desire to "find" themselves by becoming engaged with their own learning and/or teaching processes. In fact, discovering the college and deciding to come here is often portrayed as the start of a personal transformation process that has mythic qualities. For example, individuals I interviewed frequently described wanting to come here as a ritualistic first step in participating in their own self-discovery. The expected outcome of this existential process is the creation of a more meaningful intellectual and personal life for themselves.

Underlying this strong attraction to the college for many prospective members is their perception that Evergreen supports many forms of intellectual and personal exploration. "You can do anything you want at Evergreen" is a phrase I have heard uttered by incoming students and faculty alike. The college has informally come to symbolize a certain quality of experience that has strong appeal to many creative and self-motivated individuals seeking to construct an other-than-mainstream identity. In practice, Evergreen is often perceived by prospective members to represent any of several idealistic alternative realities which applicants feel have so far eluded them.

Because prospective community members frequently expect to have an unusually meaningful and satisfying experience at Evergreen, their discovery of the college is generally commemorated in their personal experience narrative. So prevalent is this phenomenon that one second-year student commented that, "Everyone seems to have this weird, magic reason why they're at Evergreen." On the same theme, another student related how, in her experience, prospective students romanticize the college and what it would be like to go here. "Evergreen is this mecca. People hear [that] Evergreen is this great place. [They think that] it's going to be so great here. Everything is going to be perfect. You're going to get to do whatever you want."

Prospective students often idealize what they perceive to be animating characteristics of the college. That is to say, Evergreen's way of doing things is perceived to symbolize all that they would like to experience in an ideal college world. In the words of a founding staff member in the community, students talk about Evergreen as if it is the "Last Chance" college for them. As this person puts it,

I don't think they use that phrase, but the idea and concept have been used here a lot. I've heard students say that, 'If I don't make it here, then I'll never make it anywhere.' By that they don't mean [not] getting a college degree. They mean becoming a learner. They come with high expectations, and for some it's an act of desperation.

As mentioned earlier, students are not the only ones who romanticize Evergreen from afar. Prospective faculty members also have a tendency to idealize what it would be like to participate in the teaching and learning process here. For instance, according to one faculty member who came to the college in the third teaching year,

This whole faculty came out of the '60s era. [There was a lot that we shared in common]. Most of us had already had jobs in colleges. We were all around the same age. We all had similar issues in our personal lives. We all came here with the same sort of hope for something different.

Another faculty member who is beginning his seventh year at the college holds a somewhat similar view of what attracts academics to want to teach here. "Faculty [who] would like to teach at Evergreen are innovative and, to use that well-used term, are creative. They want to do things differently and feel somewhat inhibited [in more conventional kinds of settings]. So, they gravitate to Evergreen."

Regardless of whether wanting to come to Evergreen is an act of desperation, inspiration, or a mixture of the two, students and faculty regard it as significant. Just how significant can be seen in the personal experience narratives on this topic which follow.

A. STUDENT DISCOVERY STORIES

To begin, I will present discovery accounts from students. An analysis of these stories reveals two basic and interrelated themes. The first is the perception of a distinctive quality that I will refer to as "institutional specialness." Related to this first theme, and in fact stemming from it, is the second theme: the existence of an unusual degree of personal freedom. Without exception, the students I interviewed, regardless of whether they were recent high school graduates or transfer students, told of experiencing a strong attraction to Evergreen's approach to teaching and learning because it struck them as being inviting in this way.

One freshman student's Evergreen discovery story is an example of this pattern. She became excited about the college through its promotional literature. After being accepted, she visited the campus. This excursion reinforced the very positive, somewhat romanticized "pre-visit" image of the school she had gotten from the college's pamphlets, catalog and other sources. Her trip convinced her that "the environment, the attitude [and] all of the things that are available for you as a student" made the college just feel like the right place for her to go. This campus made her feel more free and supported than others had. She attributed this feeling to the fact that she found it to be coherent and to have a sense of community. As she put it, "Everything [seemed to be] really close-knit, like the Computer Center. It's open all the time and you could just go in."

She was especially pleased to discover that things at Evergreen were done in what she perceived to be a less regimented and more inviting way than at her high school or at the other colleges she had visited. She noted, "Other schools seemed a lot bigger, a little more kind of straight, more like [a] hierarchy system [with] somebody pointing down at you all the time."

Her impression of the way things are done at Evergreen, however, was distinctly different. Unlike other places, she surmised, one is free here to find and pursue one's passion. "If you want to do something [at Evergreen], you just do it. It's not like there's a system that you have to beat before you can go ahead and do the things you want to do."

The idea that, as a student, you can strike out on your own here and do something that matters to you just because you want to do it, and do so without having to battle the system, also appeals to other students. A second-year science student, for example, found the college's culture rewarding for a related reason. For him, the school's supportive approach to teaching and learning was the main draw. He felt that this way of doing things would bring out the best in him as a science student. More specifically, he was attracted to the idea that,

Evergreen has an open policy with the equipment use. A lot of the research equipment, data collecting materials, things like that [are] available for any student to use. In comparison, at [a large university], to actually use it you pretty much need to be a graduate student. The availability of materials to do undergraduate research [here] is phenomenal. You have all this access and support and help in doing that.

Freedom to pursue her own interests within a stimulating and supportive environment was the primary draw for another freshman. This individual was at first torn between attending Evergreen, whose educational philosophy was more in accord with her own values, or a large, prestigious state university which she thought might eventually put her in better stead with graduate schools. When the other school offered her a "substantial scholarship" and Evergreen did not, she was tempted in the other direction. Still, she had a nagging feeling that it somehow made more sense for her to go to Evergreen than the university for one important reason. "As an undergraduate, I would have so much more freedom and so much more responsibility than I ever would at [the university]."

Here again, actually visiting the campus helped her to make up her mind.

I sat in on a seminar and that's what clinched it for me. It was just amazing to sit down in a seminar and see the faculty stepping back and not playing the teacher role, but being interested in what the students were saying. I was really excited to hear what the students' thoughts were on this book that they'd been reading. And the students had really well-developed ideas and very well-developed questions. They were very analytical. They just had it together and that really impressed me. I was really amazed at the dynamics of this seminar.

Having been excited by the freedom, support and intensity she saw in this seminar situation, she was finally convinced that she would be able to find what she was looking for at Evergreen.

I figured that either Evergreen was attracting these kinds of people, and these were the kinds of people I wanted to go to school with, or that Evergreen was cultivating these kinds of people, and that's how I wanted to be. That's what clinched [it for] me in coming here.

In fact, she was so inspired by what she observed in this seminar that she did not want to disengage from the "high" she experienced there. As a result, not only did she decide to attend Evergreen, but, as she recalls, this peak seminar experience "made me go out and buy the book, too."

Other students I spoke with were attracted to Evergreen because, at some point in their lives, they had already had a positive experience with the amount of freedom and support that had been accorded them in an alternative school of some sort. Another person, for example, had attended an alternative junior high school when she was growing up in Oregon. After this experience, the traditional high school she went to left her feeling uninspired and dissatisfied. So, when planning to go to college, she decided to try to repeat her earlier positive experience in an alternative educational setting.

I knew a man who had graduated from Evergreen in 1980 and [I] was interested in it because of what he had said. I was mainly interested in it because of the alternative education. It seemed to be the only place available with that sort of a set-up where you could not have grades. This very much appealed to me because I always thought that grades were ridiculous and unimportant; not unimportant, but [that] they just did not show anything that mattered. So I was real interested in a place that had this evaluation system, which is what I had in [my] junior high also.

In addition to this, two other characteristics of Evergreen also figured into her decision to come here. The first was that the school was "not that far away." On her initial visit to the campus, the second compelling feature became apparent. "It was beautiful. I came up to visit and it was beautiful."

The fact that Evergreen did not emphasize something which she found stifling (i.e. grades) and did have something that she experienced as freeing (i.e. a beautiful setting) excited her tremendously.

Another prospective freshman was similarly attracted to Evergreen because she hoped it would have some of the same qualities that she had enjoyed at the free high school she had attended during her senior year. Primarily for this reason, she decided to give Evergreen a try.

I graduated from an alternative school and was looking to repeat that experience. It's kind of hard to explain. I had [started out at] a traditional high school and the experience I had at the alternative high school [that I ended up in] was the best situation I'd ever had in an organized learning situation. I mean, of course nothing is going to beat just going up to the library and doing your own studying by your own self, but for school it was good.

From the foregoing comment, especially the part about going to the library, one gets a sense of what she principally values in a school: the freedom to engage in independent,

self-directed learning. For her, wanting to come to Evergreen was based on a desire to find the kind of academic freedom that would allow her to pursue her own interests.

Transfer students also describe having had some of the same motivations for wanting to come to Evergreen as do students who enrolled here straight out of high school. They, too, construct an idealized image of the school based on the widely shared perception that it supports the freedom of individual learners to discover and pursue their passion. As with their freshman counterparts, many prospective transfer students look to Evergreen to find an alternative education and/or lifestyle.

One marked difference between the two groups, however, is that transfer students are more adamant about finding a meaningful alternative experience at Evergreen. Since they have had more dealings with a mainstream educational approach and already know that it has not worked well for them, they are clearer and more articulate about the kind of freedom, stimulation and support they would like to find at Evergreen.

The story of one student who transferred to Evergreen after spending a dissatisfying freshman year elsewhere is illustrative of this pattern. She began her college career by attending a small, private liberal arts institution in another state. Soon after her freshman year got under way, however, she started to realize that this school was incapable of giving her the kind of exciting, expansive education that she had been hoping to receive. This realization led her to reflect on her needs and on the kind of teaching and learning she was experiencing at the school she was then enrolled in:

I asked myself, 'What am I learning? What am I doing here? I don't feel like I'm being challenged. I'm regurgitating everything the instructors and the professors are giving me. Where's the challenge and where's the learning?' It seemed like I was only memorizing, and in the past that's the way it had always been. I really wasn't asked, 'Well, what do you think? How do you feel?'

Although she had seriously considered going to Evergreen before she decided to attend the private school, the other institution had tempted her with several incentives that were not available at Evergreen. Once there, however, she rethought her decision.

I thought about going to Evergreen [again], because, actually, in high school [for me] it was [a choice] between Evergreen and the [private college]. The reason I [initially] chose [the private college] was because it was smaller, the weather was similar to where I came from, and they also offered me a four-year scholarship. But I realized I had to [reconsider] my decision, so I chose to transfer to Evergreen instead.

Still another undergraduate transferred in as a sophomore. This person grew up in the Northwest. She began her college education at a large state university that was close to where she lived. Her motivation for transferring to Evergreen is similar to many others: she was dissatisfied with what she was learning as well as how she was learning it.

I [had been] at the University of ----- during 1985-86 for one year. At the end of that year, I was [feeling] dissatisfied with what I was learning, with the fact that I had been

in classes with 500 people and learning history but not being able to remember it [even though] I was supposed to be a history major.

As I found with other students, this individual was aware that she was unhappy with the kind of education she had been receiving prior to discovering Evergreen. She was not aware, however, of what if anything she could do about her situation. For her, the turning point occurred when she heard about a small college that sounded as if it offered an alternative to what she was experiencing.

That summer I got two unrelated references to Evergreen. One of them was [when] my friends were talking about this 'Academic Fair'. Nobody really knew what an academic fair was, but [they did know that] it was up at Evergreen. I was like, 'Well, what is Evergreen?' Later on, I received a letter from a friend who lived in Washington. At the end, it said, 'Support the Evergreen State College.' He was going to go to Evergreen and so it was just one of those things that he wrote. I was like, 'Wow! Evergreen again!' So I wrote away for a catalog. I remember reading [something] in the catalog which [my friends] thought was sort of corny. [It was something like] 'Do you wake up in the morning because you want to or because the alarm clock goes off?' There was also a lot in the catalog about learning how to learn that really struck a chord in me.

Why did the portrayals of teaching and learning in the Evergreen catalog strike such a responsive chord in this prospective student? According to her, "I was always a good student but I never really got excited about things after elementary school." Upon reading the Evergreen catalog, however, she noted, "I was very excited."

Another student, who transferred to Evergreen after starting out at a large state university, was also seeking a kind of educational satisfaction which he could not find at his former institution. What made Evergreen so attractive to him? "I wanted a smaller school," he stressed. In addition to its size, Evergreen had another characteristic that interested him: narrative evaluations.

The grading system here [at Evergreen] was particularly attractive, as was the general philosophy of the interdisciplinary education. [Basically], at -----, I had found myself taking a variety of courses and being really interested in everything I took and feeling like I'd have to make sacrifices in choosing one area over another. I felt a lot more could be gained by dealing with them all together.

Given that he had been at the university, it is interesting that he did not try to attend ----- College, an alternative school that is close by. His desire to attend Evergreen stemmed from his impression that ----- was more bureaucratic. As he perceived it, ----- required students to do more long-range planning and go through a number of stages of approval before they were given permission to pursue their passion. "Things I'd heard made [----- College] sound a lot more bureaucratic. You [get to] design your own program there, but you're involved in a lot more [formal] proposal writing and logistical things like that."

Evergreen, on the other hand, is perceived to have less "red tape." According to this individual and other students, the process of designing one's own curriculum here is not gen-

erally regarded as being so frustrating and unrewarding that it deters people from putting forth the effort.

The discovery story of a transfer student in her mid-30s reveals a similar theme: not wanting to feel as if one is being forced into an uncomfortable mold. She dropped out of college more than 15 years ago because she felt the education she was receiving at that time was unrewarding. What made it feel that way was that she could not figure out a way to make it fit her interests. As such, it was having an unpleasant, constricting effect on her. After trying out a number of different kinds of jobs, she heard about Evergreen from some friends. Unlike other colleges she knew about, this one sounded "special." What was special about it from her perspective was the impact it had on her friends who are Evergreen alumni.

The thing I noticed about [my friends] (and this is going to sound like a promotional ad [is that] they are happy with their lives. They feel good about themselves and what they are doing. I've met plenty of professional people who don't feel this way. I don't need that. I was afraid that might happen [to me] if I went somewhere traditional like the University of -----.

Seeing how they approached their lives had a very positive impact on her. As she put it,

[Seeing them happy] gave me a good feeling. [It seemed] like Evergreen was some place you could go and not have [getting] the degree become the ultimate goal. I change so much. I didn't want to go to school somewhere and think I was going to be something and then get [stuck in] that for the next 20 years.

B. FACULTY DISCOVERY STORIES

Discovering Evergreen seems to evoke as strong a feeling of connectedness and excitement among faculty as it does with students. For example, discovering that the college exists is often portrayed by faculty members as the beginning of a meaningful personal transformation process, just as it is by students. In addition, the same central themes (the quest for the freedom to express oneself and the perception of institutional specialness) also crop up in the stories of both groups. Many of the same subthemes also occur.

One such subtheme is the perception that Evergreen's culture is inviting. What makes it seem this way to faculty? As with students, such qualities as friendliness, informality and a distinctive approach to teaching and learning are frequently mentioned. As one recent faculty member tells it,

Immediately before I came to Evergreen, I was at the ----- State College. I had known about Evergreen for several years. I read about it somewhere. I don't know where. As soon as I learned about the philosophy of education at Evergreen, I knew that's what I wanted. It was exactly my idea of what education should be. [I read about it in an article] in some magazine, and I got really excited about it. I was looking for another place to work because I wasn't really happy in New Jersey. And so the moment I saw an ad for a position open, I applied.

For this individual, reading about Evergreen struck a responsive chord. It also sparked the creation of a positive, supportive image. As with many other students and faculty, visiting the college only strengthened his feeling of excitement and sense of connection.

They [flew me out] here all the way from the East Coast. I was here for two days. I liked it from the beginning. The image I had of Evergreen was exactly like I was finding [when I came] here: the friendliness of the people, the informality, the fact that the students had a lot to say about hiring. That really impressed me. I remember that in the hiring committee there were at least two or maybe three students. I just really liked it from the beginning. They called me and offered me the job and I accepted it, even though I had already been offered other jobs on the East Coast which in some ways were better because they had better pay. Still I wanted to be here so much that I accepted it.

The story ends on a comparative note: working elsewhere would have paid more. Despite this inducement, coming to teach at Evergreen is what this person chose to do. Why? The experience of teaching here was perceived to be sufficiently satisfying to make the trade-off worthwhile. Such admissions of personal sacrifice in order to come here are not infrequent.

Another theme expressed by faculty in relation to what motivated them to come to Evergreen can be described as "the perception of a better fit." One person, for instance, told of teaching in an "Evergreen way" at a conventional institution. For him, moving to Evergreen was a matter of feeling as if his educational philosophy would be better understood and supported here.

I ended up here because everyone who I worked with [at a community college] kept telling me to go to Evergreen and work. I had a tendency to rebel a bit and not confine my teaching to a 50-minute hour, five days a week. I would seminar with my students. I would make them read outside materials, write a lot, do a lot of mathematics. The trade-off was that I would not require them to be sitting in a chair five days a week for 50 minutes. If we reached our weekly goals then we did not need to meet anymore. That drove people nuts in the traditional setting. A lot of people there just kept saying, 'That's great. You are doing that. The students are learning a lot, but it is just not the way we operate. You ought to look into Evergreen.' It was not a threat at all. It was just some very constructive advice that there was a place that was doing what I was doing. I took it as a compliment. In fact, when I applied to Evergreen and was offered the position there, people where I worked were quite disappointed that I was leaving, but they knew it was a good move for me. In fact everyone remarked, 'What a good fit it will be for you when you go down there.' So, the transition was easy for me because I was pretty much operating as an Evergreener before I came. It has been the most wonderful experience, to [go from] what appeared to be a rebellious habit of seminars and interdisciplinary work to suddenly [be] around 175 other people doing the same thing. It feels pretty good.

Related to the perception of a better fit is another theme: "the feeling of a vague sense of dissatisfaction" with a more conventional institutional approach to education. One of the

early faculty at Evergreen eloquently expressed the nature and evolution of this kind of dissatisfaction in the following story:

I was teaching at a small college in New Hampshire and I'd been there about six years. I didn't even know the word interdisciplinary, but I thought if this part [of the curriculum] and that part could get together, maybe things wouldn't be so empty. But I did not even know how to talk about it to anybody. I just felt kind of peculiar. So I just taught my subject and my Core program.

Then in 1970, [a new faculty member] came there from ----- . He came to [the college] as the dean of Humanities. He had a thought that here's a small New England college and maybe he could do something [innovative] with it. He was totally interested in teaching and discussed it constantly. No one else ever talked about teaching at this college. They just talked about what their obligations were. He wanted to know what worked and how a person learns. He would ask such questions [about this] of the faculty, regardless of what disciplines [they] were in. No one else did that. They said, 'Artists had to talk to artists, historians to historians. We're different and we can't talk to each other.' He would raise these issues.

So I thought this guy was great and got to know him. We got to be really close friends. [At one point], he had a retreat of the Humanities faculty. He said, 'Why don't we all go away and talk about what kind of a Humanities department we want, and why doesn't everyone bring a piece of current work to share with each other?' I thought that was amazing. No one had ever asked for work; they just wanted you to be in the classroom on time. So I brought a poem I was writing, a long piece. We had all these meetings and in the evenings we sat by the fire, and there were about 25 faculty there. He said, 'OK, this is a good time to do the work part.' Of course, no one said anything. He asked, 'Well, who brought work?' I was the only one. I could not believe this. So he said, 'Well, I guess it's you and I'. I read my poems and he showed slides he was making.

Shortly thereafter, he got into all sorts of trouble. The higher people in the college hated what he was doing. They did not like this sharing, interdisciplinary conversation. They blocked him budgetwise and he realized it was a dead end. So he only stayed one year and then he came to Evergreen. He wrote me a letter and it said, 'You belong here. It's exactly what we've been talking about, what we've wanted. As soon as there's an opening, I'll call you.' And soon there was one. I had an interview and I got hired. It was very exciting to come here because I knew I couldn't stay at that [other] school anymore once I realized what I was missing and it was given words. So I took a leave of absence for a year and I worked as a breakfast cook in Greenwich Village [while I was] waiting to hear from [him] and applying other places.

Founding faculty attraction stories:

Not surprisingly, the same core themes and patterns that emerge as central in the discovery stories told by faculty who came after the 1970-71 planning year are also mentioned in stories told by the founding members of the Evergreen community. The primary difference,

of course, is that the founders did not so much "discover" existing qualities but rather instilled them in the college in the first place. As a result, their narratives are more appropriately referred to as "attraction" stories, that is, accounts of what attracted them to come and found Evergreen.

Given this largely semantic difference between founders' attraction tales and their later colleagues' discovery anecdotes, there are a number of commonalities. Among these are the two central themes I noted earlier: the quest for freedom and the perception of institutional specialness. These are particularly evident in the following stories from founding members:

There were several [motivations for coming here among the founders] I think. Some folks were escaping 'Brand X.' They said, 'I've had it up to here with departments and divisions, curriculum committees, that sort of stuff.' Some folks thought we were wanting to make a brave new world. Some folks thought maybe we were going to make heaven on earth, make Utopia. Some folks thought we were going to make a good liberal arts college.

Commenting on his motivation for coming to Evergreen, another founding member also expressed these two basic themes in his attraction story:

I saw an opportunity to come and then recruit people who wanted to collaborate [in order to create something new and exciting]. The idea of team teaching to me involves the excitement of having [several faculty] on the same team [with] different [disciplinary] perspectives. Through that dialogue, a student would have access to much more than they would otherwise. That was pretty much the kind of vision I had. I saw this as an opportunity to help to structure and to plan this kind of enterprise.

Once again championing these two core themes, another founding member characterized what had attracted him to come to Evergreen, the vision he had hoped to create here:

I didn't want to see the kind of rigidity and so forth that I had seen in departments and divisions with prerequisites and that sort of stuff. I wanted a much more pluralistic, culturally diverse curriculum, student body, staff and faculty. I knew that was one thing I wanted. I wanted this to be a different place for people of color, different from the ones I'd been in.

C. DISCOVERY SUMMARY

Throughout all of these student and faculty discovery stories, Evergreen is portrayed as a vital, meaningful symbol of satisfaction, transformation and self-discovery. Through examining these narratives, a number of characteristics that prospective applicants perceive as central to Evergreen's teaching and learning culture have been identified. Indeed, these elements are at the root of the strong positive image that these prospective members tend to construct of the college.

Two characteristics figure prominently as themes throughout these accounts. One is the opportunity to experience and exercise a sense of personal freedom in defining one's own

focus in the school's teaching and learning environment. The second characteristic is inter-related with the first. It is the perception of what I have referred to as "institutional specialness."

A number of other distinctive features of Evergreen's teaching and learning culture were also cited by students and faculty in their discovery stories. Though they were not mentioned as frequently, they are no less important. As is the case with the two characteristics mentioned above, they are also all interrelated. They include the following:

- Before coming here, individuals noted they had experienced vague dissatisfaction with their conventional setting without being able to define what was wrong. After hearing about Evergreen, however, they were now able to articulate what had been upsetting them.

- Upon visiting Evergreen, my interviewees said they found the school to be inviting in lots of little ways. These subtle nuances of Evergreen's culture made them comfortable, and gave them the feeling that they could "be themselves."

- After visiting the college, the students and faculty I interviewed noted that they did not get the impression that they would have to fit into a pre-existing "mold" which they found uninspiring or censoring of whom they would like to become. They perceived that they would experience a "better fit" here than they would elsewhere.

- Closely related to the above is another perception: that they would somehow be able to find greater happiness in their lives by coming here. In general, this idea was derived from the perspective that an other than mainstream lifestyle would be acceptable here.

In addition to these characteristics, a distinctive discovery scenario also emerges from participants' experience narratives. It begins when individuals realize they are dissatisfied with their present institution. Of course, this is not Evergreen. Through some coincidence, however, they hear of Evergreen, and are immediately attracted to it because it sounds like it could be something really special. By talking with people who have gone here and reading some relevant literature, they get a better idea of what Evergreen is like. What happens next is that they fall in love with the image of the school that is suggested to them by the information they have gathered. At this point, they may visit the campus. If they do, their impressions are confirmed: Evergreen does seem to be a special place. One of the things that makes it special to them is that it appears to lack many of the qualities they disdained in their previous school. Regardless of whether they visit or not, the next step is that they decide they definitely want to come here to teach or to attend college.

In all of the ways highlighted above, Evergreen's teaching and learning culture is generally perceived to be unique by prospective Evergreeners.

CHAPTER III.

STORIES AND REFLECTIONS ON THE SECOND EXPERIENCE PHASE: INITIATION

In the last chapter, I showed how new students and faculty often enter Evergreen with an idealized image of what it is, how it works and how it will feel to participate in this community. While many people communicated aspects of this idealized image in the stories they told about their discovery of the school and attraction to it, one student identified the key theme implicit in this seductive image. Speaking for herself and her friends, she noted that they were strongly attracted to the college because they perceived that Evergreen would give them the kind of freedom and support they sought in a structured learning experience. Above all, they believed that Evergreen's distinctive approach to teaching and learning would enable them to focus on topics and processes that had meaning for them. For these students, the primary draw of Evergreen lay in their perception that, "If you want to do something at Evergreen, you just do it. It's not like there's a system that you have to beat before you can go ahead and do the things you want to do."

In this chapter, I will concentrate on the next significant experience phase that figures in members' stories: Initiation. As was the case with the Discovery phase, participants' initiation accounts reveal images, themes and patterns that stem from and, in turn, affect Evergreen's teaching and learning culture. The focus of these stories, and hence the chapter itself, is on the frustrations as well as the joys that newcomers experience when they arrive on campus, start to settle in and try to lead the life they imagined having at Evergreen before they came here.

While none of my interviewees suggested that a roller coaster ride was an apt analogy for their first few days, weeks and months on campus, this metaphor is conceptually useful for trying to see Evergreen in the way that many newcomers say they found it upon their arrival. According to their stories, their initiation consisted of a progression of encounters with unexpected settings and events. This experience led them to characterize their early on-campus experiences as a series of emotional "peaks" and "valleys".

Peaks occurred when they were pleasantly surprised by encounters that met or surpassed their initial expectations. When such was the case, they told how their original idealistic image of the college was confirmed and reinforced. Such affirming initiation experiences have been portrayed by my interviewees as being a big morale boost.

Emotional valleys occurred, on the other hand, when initiation experiences contradicted members' expectations. Instead of reinforcing the idealistic image which inspired them to come here, unexpected experiences challenged this image and instilled in newcomers a kind of culture shock. Frequently this left them feeling compromised, disoriented, disappointed and frustrated.

Why are two opposing images of Evergreen central in participants' accounts of their early experiences on campus? Is there any discernible pattern as to which initiation experiences tend to be perceived as satisfying or dissatisfying by newcomers? More generally,

what do new students and faculty say happens to them when they come here because they are inspired by an idealized image they have constructed of the school and then find that their vision of Evergreen's teaching and learning culture may or may not reflect the everyday reality they discover?

By examining both kinds of student and faculty initiation stories in this chapter (i.e. those that portray an ideal image as well as those which present a more cynical one), insight is gained into what kinds of early experiences members have as well as how these affect them. First, I will examine narratives that emerge from students' earliest experiences on campus.

A. STUDENTS' PRE-PROGRAM INITIATION STORIES

Dissatisfying pre-program experiences:

After commenting that many incoming students initially perceive Evergreen to be a sort of mecca, one graduating senior noted that these same people "spend a quarter here, or even a week and [realize] it's not as ideal as they [have been] making it out to be." Other students tell similar tales of how they experienced significant surprise and frustration once they landed on campus. For them, Evergreen turned out to be something other than what they had expected to find. One senior had seen this pattern occur so many times among her friends and acquaintances that she cynically observed, "This [experience] is something that everybody has to deal with."

Stories which depict new students' first experiences on campus were in great supply among my interviewees. From their perspective, the majority of their early encounters ended in culture shock. Most described how a series of invalidating experiences prompted them to seriously question their previously idealistic image of the college and sometimes replace it with a more cynical point of view. This is reflected in the fact that the most prominent theme in my interviewees' accounts of their first experiences is the unexpected discovery, as one individual put it, that "You can't do whatever you want."

Because many of their earliest encounters at the college take place in such administrative offices as Financial Aid, Registration and Academic Advising, students' most resonant experiences of culture shock generally occur in these areas. As a result, stories of their early dealings in these milieux generally include portrayals of the surprise, anger and disillusionment they felt. For instance, one recent transfer student told of having an especially difficult time in her first encounters with campus administrators.

Well, the acceptance and the financial aid stuff was just -----, the whole thing. Because my credits were coming from 20 years ago, I guess they didn't accept them right away. I had to do the supplemental application. That was kind of intimidating. I had to write something about me that I knew people were going to be judging.

Instead of feeling supported and inspired (what she had expected to experience upon landing at Evergreen) this student discovered what seemed to her an altogether different way of doing things. Continuing with her story, she recollected that,

They didn't say this, but it was like, for whatever reason I was not accepted right off the bat. [Instead it was], 'Tell us why you think you should go here.' I had enrolled [in a community college for two years before coming here] because I wanted to get my feet wet with some kind of academic schooling since I hadn't gone for a while. I was doing really well there, but I hadn't earned credits yet so I couldn't say [to people here], 'Well look, here is proof of what I did.' The whole process just took longer to get accepted. It slowed down the financial aid process for me and everything revolved around financial aid [for me]. I needed financial aid to come here.

The frustration she felt due to the pace and complexity of the school's acceptance process contradicted the somewhat idealistic organizational paradigm she had expected to find. Rather than feeling empowered by her first experiences as a community member to "do whatever she wanted to do," this incoming student was shocked and dismayed to discover that she was being constrained by a bureaucratic process which she did not realize even existed on this campus.

Although everything worked out in the end of her story (i.e. she got what she needed to come here), it happened in a way that challenged her previously idealistic view of the college. Instead of feeling as if her problems mattered to the Evergreen personnel with whom she was dealing (a situation she had anticipated), she wound up believing her concerns were unimportant to anyone but herself.

When I went into the office and was telling them, 'Look guys, I have to move. I have to find a place to live. I think you are asking too much to expect me to do it in a week.' [Their response was predictable]. 'Well, we had someone quit and someone's gone on vacation, and so on and so forth.' [I said], 'I understand that these things happen. So you mean that you want me to cut you some slack there. What about when your deadlines come up, are you going to cut me some slack?' [Of course their answer was], 'No.'

Early encounters are highly symbolic to new students. When these go counter to their expectations, newcomers may feel they have misjudged the school. As a result, they may adopt a more cynical point of view toward it. After telling this initiation story, the above student related that the experience had left her feeling somewhat disillusioned. To make sense of what had transpired, she adopted the perspective that this hassle was just one more example of "dealing with a bureaucracy." In her words, "The bureaucracy didn't seem to be any easier [to work with] here than anywhere else."

Other students reported having similar early on-campus experiences. A student who is now a senior, for instance, described her first registration experience at Evergreen as well as how it affected her.

I hate registration. I hated it from the very moment I had to register as a Core student. I didn't like all the standing. It took me longer to register at Evergreen than it did to register at the University of -----. I mean, I was in and out of registration at the University of ----- in an hour. I got all my classes and paid my tuition in an hour. At Evergreen, I was in line for three hours to make a registration appointment and then in line for another two hours to get through the picture-taking lines.

This student's response to the unexpected registration bottleneck was typical of many of my interviewees: in a word, culture shock. "If you want to talk about this ideal, utopian picture of Evergreen, that [registration experience] was 'bubble-bursting.' It was like, 'Oh my god, there actually is a system that doesn't quite work at Evergreen!'"

This same early culture shock theme was repeated many times by other students. Academic Advising was the scene for some of these tales as well. One recently arrived freshman, for example, recounted her first bubble-bursting experience which occurred in this department. As was the case with the other students, this individual entered Evergreen with an idealized image of what she expected to find, an organizational culture that empowered and supported newcomers. She, too, tells of being surprised and disappointed at what she found.

There was so much red tape. I went down to the Academic Advising office to get information and I just got completely blown off by them. I felt really bad about it. It was at the beginning of the year. I came in and I was like, 'Can you please give me information about contracts and how to do them?' Because I thought Evergreen was going to be like [my free high school], I expected them to say, 'OK. Here's a contract. Go find a teacher.' But the advisor just gave me this big, big runaround and said, 'Oh, it's really hard to do. You're a first-year student; you don't want to get involved with this. Just take a Core program.' And I was like, 'Well, could you give me the information anyway?' So he did, but he made it sound really difficult. He was like, 'First you've got to do this, then you've got to do this, then you know you've got to run around and do this, and even then the faculty might not want to do it.'

Instead of feeling that her interaction with the advisor had empowered her, she tells of her self-esteem being lowered by the encounter.

I felt kind of stupid for being such a coward, but it was my first time ever being in a full-time college and I was scared. I just figured, 'Oh well, I guess he must know best. I guess it must just be a lot harder to do contracts here.' So I just signed up for a Core program. And I haven't been back there to find out any more information since then.

As has been the case for many of the recently arrived students with whom I have spoken, this kind of unexpected experience is interpreted as being more than just a personal disappointment. Students' unexpected surprise stories often convey the feeling that Evergreen's culture has somehow let them down by shattering their idealistic image of how the school does things. This outlook is frequently reinforced when students get together and informally share tales of their invalidating experiences.

Later I talked to some of my friends, and they all said, 'Oh yeah, I had the same experience.' They were also told to just take Core programs. And in some cases it was a lot more inappropriate for them to be in Core programs than it was even for me. [One of my friends] is a junior. She's been in college for a long time, and yet they told her to take a Core program. So now she's in one with a lot of incoming freshman and she's bored out of her mind.

Invalidating experiences of this sort can radically alter the metaphors students use to describe the way they view the school. Before entering the college, for example, one student

saw Evergreen as something of a mecca. After her invalidating encounter, however, she began to compare her interactions with the college to something less idealistic: "It was kind of like dealing with the government," she said. Clearly this new image reveals a semantic shift that signals she has adopted a different, more cynical view of Evergreen's culture.

In addition to telling us what students find distressing upon their arrival on campus, their experience narratives also indicate what kinds of encounters they prefer and why. The following account, for instance, provides insight into the kind of interactions students would rather have in their first encounters with administrators on campus. Referring once again to her invalidating experience in Academic Advising, one interviewee suggested what would have felt better to her.

Maybe [if the advisor had] taken out some sample [independent study] contracts and showed them to me so I could get a feel for how rigorous contracts are, it would have made me feel better. Instead he was like, 'Oh, you don't want to do that, oh no, no. That's much too hard.' And maybe that was true. Maybe it really is much too hard. But I would have preferred to find out about it [in a different way].

As can be seen in the above account, students (at least those with whom I spoke) do not appreciate feeling as if they are being manipulated into making important decisions that will have unknown consequences on their academic experience at Evergreen before they have a clearer sense of what they are getting themselves into. Because of this, they tell of becoming especially upset when a school official seems to be withholding information from them in order to steer their decision-making in a certain direction. This way of doing things is viewed with skepticism by newcomers. They see it as a typical bureaucratic stratagem, and therefore not what they had expected to find at Evergreen.

A way of interacting that symbolizes openness, honesty and caring, on the other hand, curries incoming students' favor and inspires feelings of trust and satisfaction on their part. This kind of communicative approach is viewed as giving them the information they need to understand their own reality and make their own best decisions. A more didactic approach used by the advisor is likely to be perceived as inappropriate and intimidating by many incoming students. This is particularly true when they came to Evergreen because they were inspired by its egalitarian and co-participatory rhetoric and image.

Satisfying pre-program experiences:

As noted at the outset of this chapter, there are two principal themes in members' initiation stories. A theme of culture shock and cynicism dominates students' descriptions of their earliest experiences on campus. In fact, I found only one clear exception to this general pattern among those I interviewed. Instead of discovering that even Evergreen can act in an impersonal and bureaucratic manner, this student recalls her first encounter as reinforcing her idealistic image of the college. The difference for her was that one college administrator treated her in a way that she could see reflected concern for her individual well-being. "What was really important to my success at Evergreen was that there was a 'human face' on it. There was somebody whom I could go back to and say, 'Look, I've made it [to Evergreen]. Here I am. Please sort of keep track of me.'"

Although this student believes that many people at Evergreen are "really happy to take new Greeners under their wing and help them along," she also senses that this sort of personalized mentoring "doesn't always happen in institutionalized areas" on campus, areas such as Financial Aid, Registration and Academic Advising. According to her comments as well as those I heard from other students, the essence of this second, more positive initiation scenario begins for new students when they have the feeling of "being able to connect with somebody." While I was told "it doesn't matter who" the connection is with, it seems that students often find this special rapport they desire from a faculty member in their first program. Those who moved to the college and found this sort of connectedness right away emphasized that it made their early days at Evergreen seem more positive and fulfilling. One of my interviewees helped to put this feeling of connectedness in perspective for me when he commented how for him: "This [feeling of connectedness] is a real important feature at Evergreen that I haven't really felt at other colleges."

So far we have discovered that having a feeling of connection with the college early on is important to new students. If this is the case, however, why are incoming students seldom able to find such rapport during their first few days or weeks on campus according to their own stories?

The idealized image of Evergreen culture that many new members bring with them is based on their perception of everyday life in academic programs. Here the freedom for students to explore, experience and express themselves in ways that are uniquely meaningful to them as individuals generally does exist. For the most part, however, students' first resonant on-campus experiences generally do not occur in academic programs. Instead they happen in administrative areas such as Financial Aid, Registration and Academic Advising, areas which, due to their size, function and design, are more susceptible to being perceived as inflexible, impersonal and uncaring. Though I have personally observed many extraordinary examples of caring and concern among administrators in these departments, students' tales of their first experiences here do not reflect such a positive image of the institution.

B. STUDENTS' PROGRAM INITIATION STORIES

Satisfying program experiences:

A predominantly positive image of the college does not reappear in students' experience narratives until they start to participate in academic programs. At this point, they begin to express the same kind of enthusiasm and excitement for Evergreen that characterized their discovery stories in Chapter II. For example, one student who had only recently become ensconced in her program stated, "I love it! I knew from reading the catalog description and talking with the professors that [my program] was going to cover stuff that I was really interested in."

Another newcomer said that she discovered for the first time in her life that learning could be exciting. In fact, she found it to be so stimulating that she admitted, "I got over-

excited [at first]. I had to learn how to tone down in seminar because I'd get so excited about ideas."

Why does the time Evergreen students spend in coordinated studies programs seem to be so stimulating and satisfying? One answer to this question may be found in the initiation experience stories I collected. Out of these tales, two interrelated themes emerge. One stems from students reporting how excited they were when their programs helped them to "see connections" between a variety of ideas and disciplines for the first time. Instead of seeming fragmented and uninteresting, as it had in other educational formats, knowledge all of a sudden became more relevant, compelling and personally meaningful. This is where the second theme becomes apparent. Not only do students talk about being excited about what they are learning, they also speak enthusiastically about how they are learning it. Often for the first time in their lives, participants said they felt connected to the actual learning process that transpired in their programs. In reflecting on her first program at Evergreen, one senior noted, "I remember really loving the academic journal and making connections."

Students also emphasized that a program's variety of learning activities is important to their feeling involved in it and stimulated by it. "What I like about [my program] is that there's the homework, the workshops, the presentations, the seminars, and all that stuff to participate in."

Not only does a variety of topics and learning approaches keep the experience vital, it is also viewed by students as giving them a greater amount of flexibility. This in turn helps them to feel more in control of what they learn and how they learn it.

[The coordinated studies format] lets you go as deep or as light as you want. [For example], you can just read the assignments the night before class and then go to class and discuss them. You really choose how much time and energy you devote to these aspects of the program.

Feeling that one is given permission to be in charge of how one uses the educational opportunities made available in a program seems to have a positive impact on students. Such freedom and flexibility helps members to feel more interested and involved in what they are studying. As one person said, "What this means for me is that it is stimulating me."

Comments of this sort helped me to understand what cultural characteristics participants found satisfying in their early program experiences, on the one hand, but lacking in their initial dealings with the administrative offices that serve students on the other hand. It turns out that the principal component they were missing is a special kind of connectedness, one that is best described as "engagement." Students' program experience stories portray a variety of situations which they find particularly meaningful and therefore engaging.

An important source of engagement, according to students, is the nature of the subject matter under study in their coordinated studies program. One freshman, for instance, noted with delight how much more relevant and engaging she found the readings and discussions here than she had at her high school.

It's kind of like everything they taught me in high school is now being tested here. No gender studies were really taught [in high school]. And Vietnam [was just skipped over]. It was like, 'Oh, it's the end of the year. We have four days until finals, we'll just forget Vietnam. We'll just let it slide.'

Instead of skipping over issues and problems which are relevant and engaging to this student as her high school had done, she views her Evergreen program as attacking them head on. "It's like everything that they didn't teach us in high school is being taught here with more truth to it instead of this like 'hidden secret.' I mean, [here] we're reading material by Native Americans and not just about Native Americans, which I really like. I feel a lot better."

In addition to being enthusiastic about their program's subject matter, a number of my interviewees expressed satisfaction regarding their program's culture. One area that students repeatedly commented on positively is the egalitarian nature of student/teacher relationships. "One thing that I liked the first day [of class] was that the teacher was equal to the students. That felt really good. You could call them by their first names."

Being on a first-name basis with their faculty held a special symbolic significance for many of my interviewees. They interpret this practice to mean that Evergreen faculty treat them with greater respect.

[The faculty] treat you better [here]. Instead of having to earn their respect, they give you the respect [up front] and then it's up to you to either let them keep it or to take it away. Whereas where I came from, it was like everyone was 'down there' [i.e. subservient] and you had to do this and that to get 'up there.' It was just a bad scene.

Two other aspects of everyday academic life at Evergreen also facilitate students' sense of engagement. These are program flexibility and student co-participation. That these contribute to students' feelings of engagement is apparent through their comments, especially those about having a hand in shaping how things were done in their programs. As one person described it, "There isn't this 'set feeling'." Instead of the rigidity many had come to expect from educational institutions, they found here a flexibility that was stimulating and invited their participation.

Underlying the flexible program structure that students found appealing, there typically exists a supportive teaching and learning culture. Not only did I see firsthand the central role this factor played in my frequent observational visits to programs, but its widespread existence on campus was corroborated by numerous students' stories. Their enthusiastic accounts of the discoveries they were making within their programs about their own learning processes let me know that supportive cultures existed in many coordinated studies programs on campus.

Of the many individual learning discoveries I heard about, one of the most frequently mentioned was the value of interactive learning in a supportive seminar setting. "Before [coming to Evergreen] I would read a book and I wouldn't ever talk to anybody about what it meant to them. When I found out I could learn more by talking to other people [in class], it was a big, important discovery."

Students' discovery that learning can be more rewarding by occurring in a supportive community situation took another form as well. Supportive program cultures were described by participants as helping them learn valuable ways of working together as a community. Instead of encouraging competition between students, a typical supportive program environment at Evergreen was depicted as facilitating a desire for shared participation as well as fostering the interpersonal skills needed to do it. One freshman, for example, described the supportive culture in her program as well as the positive impact it had on participants.

One thing that really impressed me Fall quarter was seeing just how supportive this environment is. Instead of being competitive, like for example it would be at the University of ---- where there's only one number one place and so therefore you're always fighting to see who can get to the top of the pack, here everyone's supportive. Everyone's doing his own thing. So, you're not competing with each other because you're more competing with yourself, because you're the only one who's studying [a particular topic]. That [other] person is doing [a different] project. They're headed in [a different] direction. Since you're not headed in the same direction for the most part, there's no worry about fighting for first place, because you've all got your own place. The faculty and the students are just so supportive of whatever you're doing. It's amazing, I think.

One newcomer told an initiation story that is interesting from the standpoint that it shows how several factors contributing to a students' sense of engagement may be present in a particular program context. The tale begins when the narrator approaches a faculty member to give him feedback on how something could be done in a way that would work better for her.

I talked with my seminar leader and expressed that I wanted to be doing a lot more than what we were doing. [I also asked if] the program was going to change [with respect to the workload] and so on and so forth. His response to me was, 'Well, you can always be doing more outside of class.' He said, 'Well, whatever you're interested in, I'll help you get it together and help you figure out what you want to be reading and studying.' He even offered to go to the library for me and get the books.

There are several factors revealed in this tale that facilitate the student's feeling of engagement. The first is freedom of self-expression. She felt free to express a desire to do things differently. His willingness to accommodate her reflects the flexibility inherent in the coordinated studies approach as practiced at Evergreen. His offer to help by doing some library research for her symbolizes a supportive approach to teaching.

What was the outcome of this program encounter? For one thing, the student's idealistic image of Evergreen and her belief in its specialness was reinforced. "I was amazed that he would be that interested, that he would [offer to] put that much time into my interests outside of class. I don't think you would find that kind of attention at many other colleges or universities. It was very impressive."

In addition, she felt that her desire to be engaged in her own learning process was supported insofar as he had come up with a way to help her do something that mattered to her.

I ended up doing this study project outside of class with a classmate and being helped by [my seminar leader]. It entailed our doing a lot of readings outside of class and getting together to discuss them, breaking it down into different research topics. We intend to turn it into an article to submit to MS magazine, for example, or any other appropriate forum.

Another indication that academic programs at Evergreen help students feel connected with and inspired by their own learning process comes once again from their stories. Not only do they narrate about the positive impact their academic programs have on them during class meetings, they also tell of an ongoing effect on their lives outside of class. Because many students find participating in a program learning community to be a transformative experience, they may try to integrate certain aspects of this process into their everyday life as well. For example, one student told of how she and her roommate would often break into informal, spontaneous seminars in their dorm.

Something I think is pretty great about the living situation [on campus] is that we end up having informal seminars rather often. For example, one of my roommates and I are in the same program and we'll just end up talking about whatever it is we're studying right there at the kitchen table. So it does extend outside of the classroom.

And even at the beginning of the year when none of us had actually started classes (there was a one-week period when classes hadn't actually started but we were living in the dorms), we ended up talking about a variety of subjects with people we'd run into in the hall.

Basically what I'm trying to say is that people here tend to have interests besides what's in their little textbook. They don't close it and then just go home. People's minds stay open and active outside of the classroom here, so we end up having informal seminars whenever the mood strikes. I think that's pretty unique.

Dissatisfying program experiences:

While many students find that Evergreen's approach to teaching and learning inspires them in ways that have an immediate and positive impact on their lives, others tell of sometimes feeling frustrated or blocked by this same process. One student, for example, who was delighted by the flexible culture and interdisciplinary approach of her program, told of a classmate's less than positive reaction to the same setting.

This one woman in class asked me how I liked the program. I was like, 'Oh, yeah, I really like it', and she made a face. I said, 'Oh, don't you like it?' This was a big surprise to me that somebody could be in the program and not like it. She said, 'Well my background is heavy science and there's just no content to this class.' I was so surprised. I liked [the program] because it wasn't [the usual], 'Here's the human body. Memorize all the muscles.' I could look that up in a book. I don't need to memorize that. It's not how my mind works. I want to know how the muscles are used or something. I want to know applications. I don't just want to have a catalog stuffed into my head.

The narrator of this tale portrays herself as being a believer in the loosely constructed, co-participatory and interdisciplinary format of her program. From her perspective, the complainant missed the point of the program's flexible structure.

To me, it was as if she wasn't grasping the idea of the class. What they [the faculty] present in class is not [all there is to] the class. It's only the background, the foundation. The emphasis is what you do with what you learned in the program. Most of my energy, for example, is going toward what I'm interested in. I love that. I really didn't even have any idea that that's what school here was going to be like.

Interestingly, many who were critical of their respective programs also declared themselves to be arch supporters of the Evergreen educational concept. Clearly it was not their agenda to simply paint a negative image of teaching and learning here.

What criticisms students did make, however, revealed one dominant theme: that many of the same program characteristics which contribute to learning experiences that have a positive impact on them can also have a downside. That is to say, when these same cultural characteristics reappear in different program contexts, they may contribute to learning experiences that are perceived to have some sort of a negative impact.

One characteristic that is perceived to have a downside as well as an upside is flexibility. The same loosely constructed program cultures that participants earlier described as giving them the freedom and support they needed to find their own way are occasionally perceived as obstacles to effective learning. For example, one student complained that the various learning experiences being provided by his program did not seem coherent. Rather than helping him make the connections he wanted to make, he perceived his program was thwarting his learning efforts.

Right now [my program] feels really scattered. Things aren't really connecting. I mean, everything that I'm learning is interesting, but I don't understand how the movies connect with the lectures and the books. I'm waiting for something to happen so it will all meld together, [to get to] a point where I'll go, 'Oh, Now I understand.' But right now it's like the lectures are pretty separate from the reading material and the reading material seems pretty separate from the movies that we've watched. I'd like to see them come together a lot more than what they are right now.

Others leveled related criticisms with regard to assignments given early in the year. "The first assignment was really vague. It was so open. At first I was really frustrated because I was like, 'No, tell me what to do. Tell me exactly what you want.'"

Lack of direction in class was another criticism I heard on a number of occasions.

Last quarter I was kind of frustrated. Even though I've done a lot of independent study with correspondence work I was frustrated because it seemed like there wasn't very much direction offered in class. We only were given three writing assignments for the whole quarter. That just blew me away. I did that many a week sometimes in high school. I just couldn't understand why they were giving us so little work. I had all this time on my hands. I was getting so frustrated because here I was with all this aca-

demic energy. I was just so ready to go out there and be doing all this stuff, and they weren't saying, 'Go do this' or 'Write this paper by this date.' Even if you didn't get an assignment in by the deadline, that was ok. In high school, it's like, 'Automatically 1/2 credit off.' [I felt like saying], 'Wait a minute, I'm used to doing more work than this.' That was really frustrating.

Still other instances of insufficient direction were reported as well. In one story, for instance, a sense of vagueness was pinned on program faculty for not clarifying their expectations for how the program culture would work at the outset of the first meeting.

I would say the first week of classes was kind of weird because I didn't really know what my faculty or staff expected from me as a student. I found out a couple of weeks afterwards that everyone felt that way. We brought it up in seminar and talked about it. It was as though the faculty assumed we knew, and we didn't. Especially in a Core program, I think there needs to be more explanation of what's expected of us as students here. I mean, I didn't know if I should raise my hand [in class]. I mean, I just didn't know. I'm new here. I came out of a very conventional public high school. So, it took a while just to figure out what was going on.

Another factor that was perceived as having a downside as well as an upside is the coordinated studies structure itself. While not a major criticism, one new student did voice a regret that he was unable to take an elective and have it be totally unrelated to everything else he was studying.

In high school I was really into theater, into drama [as a hobby]. But it's kind of hard [to do that as a hobby here]. That's one thing that I was kind of disappointed about. They have theater here, but in order to do it you have to take a whole year or semester or something. But it isn't something I want to devote my whole program to. It is something that I would like to do on the side. That's not available, and that kind of bummed me out. They say that if you really want to do [drama] you can organize it yourself and get a bunch of people to do it with you and stuff. But right now, I don't have the energy to do that. So, I just put it to the side for now.

Two other downside factors were communicated by students via their experience stories. Both pertain to difficulties that were widely experienced in Core programs. Unlike those mentioned above, however, these two are not viewed as sometimes enhancing the curriculum. The first has to do with the mix of participants in a given Core program and the impact this has on teaching and learning.

In the Core programs, there are so many people coming from so many different [backgrounds and interest] areas. It's like everyone has to take a Core program when they are new or when they're a younger student and haven't had much schooling yet. [This means] you've got people from every viewpoint: from environmental studies, to the sciences, English, business, things like that. They're all in there and they're all talking about these [different] things. When you have that you get a lot of clash.

The second factor has to do with the perceived lack of seriousness of some participants in Core programs by other participants. One incoming freshman stated emphatically,

One thing that I think that these assessment people should know, from an insider's point of view, is that sometimes I feel that there are a lot of people at this school who aren't as serious about their education as I wish they would be. Now, I'm not saying I'm this crazed striver and that I study every minute of the day, but I'm interested in what's going on. And I feel that [too many] people choose Evergreen because of its 'hippie-organic' reputation and not for what it can offer as a school. A lot of people take advantage of that and just flake out on school and stuff. They think they can get away with it because of the kind of school that it is. It bugs me because I am trying to do the work that is assigned to us, and doing it because I want to do it, not because I have to. And then there are these other people who are not and it just makes me angry. They're just kind of, 'Yeah, I'm going to go for a walk in the meadow.' Stuff like that's fun but you can't deny the educational part, the academics. I don't know what Admissions could do to make sure the people they're letting in this school are really serious about their education, but I'd like to see some more people who are into learning.

C. STUDENTS' SEMINAR INITIATION STORIES

I gathered another large cluster of experience stories from students on the topic of seminars and seminarng. Taking cues from my interviewees, I have placed these accounts after "first landing" stories and before end-of-the-quarter "evaluation" tales. This order reflects the progression that students gave to their own initiation experiences in their stories.

In many respects, this narrative cluster may be thought of as the symbolic center of program-related experience tales. For one thing, many of the same narrative themes and patterns mentioned earlier are also found here, but with an important twist: seminar initiation accounts are charged with a greater emotional intensity. This is especially apparent in the dramatic and often conflicting kinds of social and psychological impacts that members report experiencing in seminar. These tales suggest that participants are more deeply affected by what transpires in their seminars than they are by what happens in other teaching and learning arenas on campus.

As with earlier initiation stories, students' seminar tales reveal one central theme: "the desire to experience a strong sense of connectedness," especially with their symbolically significant interactants. In seminar, these symbolic interactants include program-related faculty and fellow students as well as members' individual selves.

Related to this central theme are two prominent initiation subthemes: that seminarng often has 1) a downside as well as 2) an upside. These perspectives stem from students' discoveries of how vastly different teaching and learning here is from the more conventional educational settings they have known. When its downside is highlighted, this Evergreen "difference" includes such unexpected and frustrating difficulties as intense, sometimes overwhelming, interpersonal tensions.

Students' upside stories, on the other hand, treat of ways they have found to work through their difficult, often painful initiation struggles. These tales present the satisfaction members feel as they begin a transformation through dealing with their seminar-related communications problems. An important message of these upside accounts is that students' turn-around efforts succeed in important ways, often, in fact, leading ultimately to the creation of learning communities that are supportive and vital.

Frustration and culture shock:
unexpected downsides to seminar

Central to this cluster of stories is many students' "pre-arrival" perception that seminar is somehow special. For them, seminar is initially shrouded in a kind of idealistic mystique. As a second-year student noted with regard to newcomers' behavior, "When people come to this school, a lot of them think that seminar is this 'magic thing.'" By magic thing, he referred to seminar as being a special place where "you go in and learn a lot" of special stuff. "But," he observes from experience, "It's not really a magic thing." In fact, one of the first discoveries students often make about seminar is that it entails a lot of work. "It was hard in the beginning," says a third-year participant, "because it was a different way of learning. It really was challenging."

This "challenging difference" can have a variety of impacts on new students. A sampling of these follow. Says one newcomer of her initial reaction to seminar, "You feel intimidated because other people know more than you and are more verbal than you. They'll ask, 'What do you think?' and you don't know what to say because you don't want to seem like an idiot."

In addition to feeling a bit intimidated by the new approach to teaching and learning they find here, incoming students also tell of feeling overwhelmed during their first days and weeks on campus because of the intense and rapidly changing nature of seminar discussions.

[Seminar] was really frustrating at first. Every time I got out of there it was just like my heart was beating really fast. At first I was just like really blown away by the whole thing. It was so overwhelming, all these ideas coming, being thrown at you. One second somebody says something and everybody's like, 'Yeah, that's really cool.' Then somebody else changes the subject, and it's like, 'Wait a second, I liked that other subject. What are you talking about?'

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I was so confused for the first two weeks. All these really intense thoughts and ideas were being brought out into the [seminar] circle. I felt like we [wouldn't] finish a thought [before] we'd move on to the next one. It was just this real scattered kind of feeling going on. I think everyone was just being kind of nervous about school and that whole 'beginning thing' [at a new school].

Feeling overwhelmed and confused in the early days of seminar, newcomers may be hesitant to actively participate. This, in turn, leads to another problem: the seminar does not seem to go anywhere.

The worst seminars are when nobody wants to say anything. At the beginning of the quarter, it's hard because people don't really know each other and they're afraid to say anything because they might offend somebody. Those seminars are so awkward. Someone will throw something out and people will just nod their heads and say, 'Oh, yeah. Right.' Then it'll just die. You can see it kind of flopping around in the middle of the floor, waiting for somebody to revive it or throw something else out there.

When a seminar seems lackluster due to new students' hesitancy and lack of enthusiastic participation, faculty may try some "teaching tricks" to stimulate discussion. One such trick that is often employed to facilitate discussion is breaking students into smaller groups. While this sometimes works, other times it does not. When it flops, this may further compound the frustration students feel over a lackluster seminar group.

We're always breaking up into small groups here at Evergreen, which I hate. It's so artificial. It's like, 'OK, time to break into small groups and, you know, interact, and have this conversation.' It bugs me after a time because either you break into small groups with the same people (and they're semi-friends and you just kind of joke around) or you break into small groups with perfect strangers. [Then] you don't really have anything to say to them.

Feeling uninspired by her new setting, this same newcomer commented that she often thought of the seminars she had known in her high school which she found more exciting.

I keep comparing this place to [my free high school] which had such an incredible system of seminars. We didn't even call them seminars. [They were] classes, or meetings, or whatever. But it seems like so far Evergreen hasn't even begun to compare with those seminars. It seems like [here] the group is too large, people are too polite and they don't have enough background information to back up what they're saying. I guess the best thing about [my Evergreen seminar] would be the potential that it has. It's a really good idea, [but] I feel like it needs better execution.

Another criticism came from new students who were disappointed by the lack of participation of a few of their classmates. One freshman, for instance, registered the following complaint:

I'm trying to do really good. I take that extra time to think, read or write about the things that I don't have to do, but that I've decided to do to benefit myself. But it bums me out when other people don't do it. I've heard some people go, 'Oh, Evergreen's the kind of school where you get to create your own education. So, if I don't like the book we're reading, then I'm not going to read it.' Instead of looking at a book and saying, 'You know, maybe this isn't my philosophy on life, but I'm going to read it [anyway] to try and get another perspective,' some students just shut off because they'd rather go hang out with their friends.

Several individuals voiced another complaint. This stems from the perception that there never seems to be enough time to do everything that class participants want to do in seminar.

There is not enough time in seminar. There's so much that everybody wants to say that we always run out of time. I think that's a problem. With a three-hour seminar, it's kind of crazy. It's just so hard to really let everybody who wants to talk say so much. There's not enough time. Sometimes we don't have closure. We barely have enough time for the main part of what we're doing.

The demoralizing impact that an ongoing controversy between students and faculty can have on a seminar is the focus of still another criticism.

In all of my seminars there was controversy and that was probably the worst thing. Controversy among the students about what was being taught and how it was being taught. In my Core program, [for instance], there was a lot of grumbling. Students [took a position] against faculty who weren't doing their job (or [weren't doing it] the way that students thought they should do it) and that we were studying things that didn't make sense, just [grumbling] to each other. You know, student culture, what students say behind faculty members' backs.

Frustration and culture shock
for people of color:

In addition to the general beginning-of-the-quarter complaints mentioned above, students of color had other, unique disconfirming initiation experiences. Those I interviewed often told of having an especially frustrating time during their first few weeks and months here. On top of having to cope with the usual institutional routines and bumpy starts in new programs, several students of color also complained of being confronted by a variety of unexpected additional hurdles. One obstacle which they felt was particularly burdensome and unfair was the not uncommon ignorance and insensitivity they perceived in some of their predominantly white classmates and, to a lesser degree, their faculty. According to my interviewees, interracial and interethnic relations are especially likely to become tense during the start-up period of a seminar. One explanation for this is that members are often encouraged to strip away customary interpersonal conventions in seminar which serve to distance and insulate people of different backgrounds. Once these customary social routines are suspended, people may broach topics and opinions that are offensive to others. This is because seminar invites students to open themselves up, wrestle with sensitive issues in their readings, adopt a critical voice and share their perceptions with one another in a comparatively uncensored manner. As a result, newcomers may unexpectedly find themselves getting caught up in something of a "let-it-all-hang-out" exercise during seminar.

Based on the data I have collected from interviews and observations, students of color may become reluctant participants in such an exercise. In fact, several of my interviewees felt this kind of experience was both demeaning and oppressive. One student of color, for example, recalled often feeling emotionally battered in seminar during her first quarter at

Evergreen. "The first quarter was hard for me, was really hard. I stayed in that program the entire year, but the first quarter was when I was really 'getting it.'"

From her perspective, the reason she felt this way was because she was the only person of color in her seminar, a not uncommon situation at Evergreen. Because of this, she frequently felt as if she was shouldering the brunt of any racial or ethnic controversy that cropped up in class discussions.

I kept getting it and getting it that [first] quarter. It was getting really frustrating for me. It was really getting me angry. Being one person of color in a seminar, I felt as if it was my duty to speak up, because I didn't want people to walk out of the seminar believing all of those things they walked in with.

Another interviewee elaborated on how, as a student of color, she was often forced into a role she would not have selected for herself: that of expert on multicultural matters. From her perspective, she was placed in this role by virtue of the interpersonal dynamics in her seminar.

Sometimes [seminar] seems tense. A little bit of you should [always] be on guard. Sometimes people will be interested in you just because you are a person of color, not for who you are [as a person]. In classes, people look to you as an expert or source of information when ethnic questions come up. It's a token thing. We're not all experts. Why do [the other students] ask me about [ethnic groups other than my own]? In a way, it's good because I know that they're interested. But it does get kind of sickening after a while.

Being routinely cast in this same kind of role led another student of color to declare, "I got to the point where I was so angry I didn't want to deal with the people or deal with the subject [in my seminar], even though I tried. I couldn't think or see or hear straight. I was so upset."

Continuing with this theme, she explained that her anger stemmed from the kind of uninformed comments and stereotyping she was frequently subjected to in class.

The things [other students] were saying, a lot of times [these] would shock me. [For instance] misconceptions about other cultural and ethnic groups and how they actually believed those stereotypes. [These stereotypes] were supposedly facts, because that is all they knew. I was shocked. I was really shocked. I felt [like saying], 'Aren't we in college?' But then I realized that that was [probably] all they had been exposed to.

One example of how stereotyping may occur in the course of a seminar meeting was recounted by an interviewee who was a freshman.

One day in the beginning of school, we were talking about issues involving Japan and the invasion of the U.S. car market. I made a comment about how Americans should not be threatened by the Japanese because America is a great big melting pot and the Japanese are just one culture doing well within it. Some guy said, 'You're just mad because you lost the war.' I got really defensive. I said, 'First of all, I'm not a

Japanese national, and what does the war have to do with it?' He said, 'You're just spiteful.' I said, 'You're just ignorant.' Everyone in the class was shocked that he said those things.

A second example of stereotyping in a Core program seminar comes from another student of color.

We were talking about Native Americans, about how Columbus 'discovered' America. It was a long discussion and this one man got really frustrated. [What happened] was partially my fault, too, because I wanted to know what exactly he was talking about. He had said something that really pissed me off, to put it bluntly. [It was] something about exploration and how we're Americans and have the right to go wherever we please, you know, and that what happened with the destruction of the Native Americans was [inevitable], justifying it, that they would have died out anyway. Things like that. It just frustrated me.

Compounding the sting of the stereotype for my interviewee was the fact she felt she could not let the incident pass in good conscience. She wanted to do something constructive that would educate the perpetrator of the stereotype without alienating him. Even though she tried to be sensitive in the way she went about this, her intervention did not go as smoothly as she had hoped.

I couldn't say anything [in response right away] because I was so angry. You know [how it is] when you get so mad that you can't say anything? You have to cool off and then [later] you can speak. So I went back to the next seminar meeting and it didn't go off well either. [When] we broke up into smaller groups, I apologized to him. I just said, 'I'm sorry if I made you feel uncomfortable, if I frustrated you by asking what you meant, and if you felt as if you were being attacked.' I thought it would be better [this way], that at least we could talk about it rationally.

But I guess it was too close to home so it was painful. His response to me was, 'Well, you didn't hurt me.' It was kind of like an ego trip. 'You didn't hurt me. It doesn't bother me. What you said was nothing.' And he said, 'As far as I'm concerned, I just can't wait until we're over with the subject.' He said bluntly, 'I really don't give a shit about Indians.' It kind of shocked me because I felt, 'God, if he feels that way about Native Americans, then how does he feel about all other people of color?'

Several of my interviewees said they often let these kinds of racial slurs pass in the beginning of the year, hoping each time they heard one that it would be the last. After awhile, however, they told of feeling increasingly demeaned and exasperated every time such an instance occurred.

Initially [this kind of thing] didn't bother me. I was forcing myself to just brush it off, a defense mechanism of not taking it personally, not getting affected by it. I felt as if I was just numbing myself because I didn't want to feel the anger or the pain [even though] a lot of the things that people were saying actually hurt. It was very difficult.

Over time, however, feeling both battered by such abuse and powerless to change it takes a toll. Several students of color told of getting to a point where they no longer had the energy to engage in disputational dialogues over ethnic questions with their more insensitive classmates.

I reached a point where I was debating whether or not to stay at Evergreen. One thing that I told myself was that, 'This isn't my home. These people are from different up-bringsings, different backgrounds. I'm just one person and people expect me to speak up in regard to all people of color.'

Another person told how she had put up with her classmates' insensitivity during her first quarter here, all the while hoping it would lessen over time. When nothing seemed like it was going to improve, however, she reached a point where she became very upset, disillusioned and felt the need to do something.

When we got to the second quarter and [this insensitivity on the part of her classmates] was happening again, it was just getting me even more angry. I was becoming even more sensitized by it, more upset. I felt like fighting, to put it bluntly. I felt like fighting. I felt like when you're so sensitized you can go from one extreme to the other. You can be totally numb, where you don't even give a shit about anything, or you can be so sensitized that whatever someone does or says it just hurts. You turn all black and blue. I was like that. I was the person who felt everything. I was just so angry and upset.

Transformation: an upside to seminaring

Because seminars are less hierarchically managed than conventional classroom settings, they have the both potential to fall far short of participants' expectations as well as succeed beyond their wildest fantasies. Thus, in addition to telling of the disappointment, frustration and/or culture shock that they have experienced here, new students also frequently assert that seminar is the site of some of their most intensely felt satisfactions and most exciting growth. They portray it as a kind of experiential roller coaster ride.

Based on participants' narrating, the most vitalizing and meaningful seminar-based transformations generally follow a scenario. This pattern commences when one or more students become frustrated with a seemingly intractable problem in their seminar. When they reach a frustration point where they begrudgingly decide to handle the problem themselves, they report seeing satisfying changes start to occur. By virtue of taking on a problem of this sort, students seem to personalize it. As a result, they begin to feel more meaningfully engaged with both the mission of their seminar and the other participants.

Individuals' problems that were solved in this way ranged from ones that caused minor discomfort to others which had a far greater emotional impact. An example of the former comes from a student who is now a senior. She tells of a hassle she experienced as a freshman in her Core seminar. "I was grumbling [about being given too much work with everyone

else). But I decided to personally take it into my hands and just say, 'I'm not going to do all the reading.' [The grumbling] just got to be too much, and [the work] wasn't that bad."

The outcome of her decision was that she felt better and became more productive. On top of this, other students in her seminar followed her lead. As a result, she tells of how, they "all ended up laughing about the workload."

At the other end of the personal transformation spectrum, a student of color recounted how she overcame feeling so responsible for and frustrated over the shortcomings of some of her white classmates by deciding where to draw the line for herself. "I realized that the only person who was getting hurt from the anger I was feeling was me. I asked myself, 'Well do you really think that those who do or say these things are losing sleep over it?' I realized that I was the only one."

Out of a deep sense of frustration and helplessness she came to a conclusion that opened the way for her to experience a meaningful transformation.

I felt like why should I let them get the better half of me? I figured if these people are that ignorant, that arrogant, and that angry when they see people of color like me, then their time will come. That anger, that hatred will inevitably destroy them. Why should I let them do it to me? Why should I do it to myself? Why should I be so angry and pent up all those hostile feelings when it's only destructive to me?

Once she came to this realization, she felt relieved and revitalized. "I can't explain the feeling, but it was like this burden, all this weight, was just lifted off. It felt really good. I felt really happy."

Seminars are also the scene of group-based transformational experiences. During the first few weeks of the school year, new students tell of having breakthrough realizations concerning how and why it is in their best interests to try to work together collaboratively. Such group transformations reflect a similar pattern. Newcomers tell of tolerating frustrating aspects of their seminar in silence because they are used to playing a passive student role. Once they reach a critical point of frustration, however, they decide to try to change the things that they believe are going badly in seminar. According to these seminar experience stories, it is at this point that a problem is perceived to either lessen in importance or vanish altogether.

In one such account, students who were used to classrooms where they could operate as passive individuals began to realize that this habit did not work as well for them in Evergreen seminars.

People [in my seminar] were frustrated with what was going on. [The problem was that] we were all looking at things in different ways. Some people were analyzing the material for inconsistencies. Others were looking at it on a more philosophical level. Other people were just reading it for the story and not looking into it. So everyone was doing all these different things.

After discovering that their former ways of interrelating were ineffective in an interactive learning situation, new students became frustrated. Out of this came the motivation to take on the job themselves to change things for the better. "We finally came together as a group and decided, as a whole, how we wanted to go about approaching the material."

Other new students also told of having different kinds of experiences which nonetheless reflected the same transformational pattern. In one instance, a newcomer suffered through the beginning of the year because some of her new classmates often dominated class discussions. Describing what it was like at first, she observed,

Some people just talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, all the time. But people like me never say anything. I don't want to interrupt anybody. I don't want to cut them off or be rude. Also, what other people have to say really interests me. Sometimes I think I can learn so much more from just listening. Also I don't really need to say what's on my mind. Sometimes [though] I feel like I really want to say something, but then it's hard because people are talking. It's hard to jump in without being rude.

After several weeks, however, people in the seminar slowly grew more aware of their classmates' needs and learning styles. As a result, everyone tried to modify their behavior so as to support one another.

Those people [who talked a lot] are more conscious [three weeks into the quarter] of the people who aren't talking. They now notice, you know, when [the quiet people] want to say something. There's more of a 'group feeling' now than there was before. It has taken us awhile to get seminar-ing down. I think we've worked through it as a group really well and I think we're at a pretty good point now. It just seems to take time. That's the only way stuff like that can really happen.

Through this process of learning the ropes of seminar-ing by trial and error, participants undergo a meaningful transformation in how they think about learning. Instead of seeing learning only as something you do inside your own head, newcomers come to view it as an engaging and interactive social process. After having a variety of such initiation experiences, participants develop a sense of what makes for a good seminar. Generally, this includes such realizations as the need for sensitivity, participation, collaboration and a feeling of engagement.

Lots of people saying lots of things [makes for a good seminar]. As long as people are thinking and have some ideas to throw out there (which is usually the case), then seminars are great. You're going to get something out of it. You're going to get some new insight that you didn't have before.

I find that just by talking about my ideas, they seem to formulate themselves. [Before going into seminar], I sometimes don't realize that I know as much or have learned as much from something we read, or even that I had thought so much about it. I'll read the assignment and then somewhere in the back of my mind it's digesting. Then we go into seminar and suddenly I have all these things to say that I didn't realize I had. Seminar is extremely important for that, because it helps me to figure out what I thought about what we read.

Getting insight from other people is very important. We tend to come up with ideas as a group. Somebody will throw an idea out, somebody else will build on it, and then we come together with an analysis. It's very much collective learning here. People definitely pull together to figure things out. It's wonderful [because] it's supportive instead of competitive. It's working together toward a goal of learning instead of fighting to see who can get the most crammed into their heads.

Not only do new students come to understand and appreciate the seminar process during their initiation period at Evergreen, some may see ways to improve it. For example, one newcomer who is familiar with seminaring in other settings as well voiced a number of ideas along these lines. She would like to make certain fundamental changes in the way seminars are done at Evergreen. From her perspective, these changes would make seminars more "user friendly" and conducive to interactive learning. Below she tells what she would like to change and how she would go about it:

First of all, I'd like to take over authority from [my seminar leader] for a week. I'd ask him to be there as an observer and to give me the floor. Then I'd announce that we were going to meet [in a comfortable place] instead of in the classroom with the hard desks and the hard chairs and the bright lighting. [A place with] soft couches where the lighting is softer. Then I'd say [to the other students], 'If you don't want to come or don't have anything to say, don't come. Or, come and see [what happens].' But I'd make it clear to everyone that they were free to leave at will or to 'small group' it and talk about other things if they wanted to. I'd tell them that nobody was going to be taking notes on whether they were talking or listening or not. If they wanted to come and sit and read a book, that was fine too. Nobody would be keeping tabs on them in any way, shape, or form.

Furthermore, [I'd tell them] that nobody was going to guide the discussion artificially. Nobody was going to write up on the board [for example], 'Themes of Grapes of Wrath, (1) family, (2) family of man, etc.' If we were talking about Grapes of Wrath we'd let the conversation grow and change as different people added stuff. And you know, I bet we'd still end up talking about family. I mean, that was really important to the book and we're all smart enough to see that. We'd still be talking about the same themes but it wouldn't be like, 'Oh no, now we have to talk about family.'

How else would I change it? I'd tell everybody to bring coffee if they want, bring some food. You know, 'Get comfortable.' I would also tell them that if it looked like it was really cooking then we'd just go on [with class], that we wouldn't have to end. [As it is now], a lot of people start artificially burning out towards the end of seminar because they think, 'I've got a good thought but I'm not going to say it because we've only got five minutes. I'll just save it for next time.' I'd say that the starting time would be pretty much written in stone, but the ending time could be anytime. Likewise, if nobody wants to talk, then, 'Shucks, let's just all go home.'

Interestingly, helping students in seminar discover a feeling of connectedness (both with one another and to themselves, i.e. to their own senses and needs via such creature comforts as inviting seats and munchies) is at the root of this person's vision of an improved Evergreen seminar. Through the creation of a supportive seminar environment, she believes

students will become more engaged and therefore more excited about and committed to their own learning. In many respects, her vision correlates with what I have heard from other participants as well. This indicates that as students begin to learn the process of how to learn, they get hooked on it because they realize just how vitalizing it can be. This degree of engagement with teaching and learning echoes the early experiences of a number of Evergreen's founders (as we will see in an upcoming section of this chapter).

D. STUDENTS' EVALUATION INITIATION STORIES

Evergreen's non-traditional narrative evaluation practices also figure prominently in new students' initiation experiences. Consequently, they crop up in their storytelling. While these accounts are not as prevalent, detailed or emotionally charged as some seminar and program experience narratives, they are nonetheless important. The fact that newcomers tell evaluation stories at all is important. It indicates that they attribute significance to this distinctive practice of the college's teaching and learning culture.

These evaluation stories highlight what it feels like to be evaluated in this new way as a newcomer. Principally, they reveal how exciting and inspiring the narrative evaluation process is to those who are used receiving to letter grades. One new student said, "That's one thing nice about not having grades. I didn't have to worry about grades anymore! All I'm worried about now is learning, and that's what I wanted. That's what I wanted in the first place, so it's good."

Another newcomer spoke enthusiastically of how it felt to receive her first narrative evaluation.

I like the no grades [approach]. I do. I just got my first paper back and it was nice because there wasn't this grade on it. There was just a comment on the back, and the comment was really nice. I liked it. I felt like I'd really worked on this paper and I was really proud of what I'd done. And I felt that my professor really appreciated it and that felt really good. Just his comment, it felt better like than a letter. It just felt a lot more human and realistic. It gave me more incentive to want to work harder. Because it felt better than a grade. It felt really good.

Narrative evaluations can also have other, more subtle and indirect impacts on the way students view teaching and learning at Evergreen. Instead of being fixated on getting good grades, students enthusiastically commit themselves to becoming effective learners. This is reflected in the way they come to see evaluation as a positive force in general, even during seminar meetings.

Last quarter, I remember when we were writing our papers and a couple of us chose to read them aloud in class. One of the ones that we read was an autobiographical essay. There was no real comparison [made in class] as to whether one person's paper was better than the other person's paper. [We were] looking at each paper individually and, therefore, at each student individually. [We would say], 'OK, this person did this really well, and this person really conveyed this idea well.'

Many of my interviewees were emphatic about the positive influence a lack of grades had on their learning. Among other benefits, narrative evaluations were viewed as an important factor in making learning more personally rewarding. One way it is said to do this is by allowing appropriate learning to be defined by the individual learner rather than by imposing the same impersonal requirements on everyone.

Because we're not ranked, we don't get grades. Everyone is supported and commended for the things that they do well. Instead of having categories where 'This person does this part really well, and so they get a top rating for this category,' everyone has their own categories.

The outcome, according to a number of students, is that their learning better matches their own interests. In addition, they see themselves as learning to improve their existing strengths and rectifying their weak points instead of simply being punished for not being perfect according to external criteria.

It just seems like if you get into English 101 at the University of -----, for example, you're going to have these specific criteria you're going to have to meet. Regardless of where your strengths and your weaknesses lie, you are expected to always meet these criteria. In the real world, people don't have that same set of [inflexible] criteria. [Because of this], I think [Evergreen's approach is] more realistic. It's more 'reality-based'.

Narrative evaluations are perceived to be more reality-based because they effectively meet many Evergreen students' needs and individual learning styles. As a result, narrative evaluations are empowering. They help students to feel more in control of their learning by putting them, as individuals, at the center of the learning process. Through this process, they come to see themselves as active agents in charge of their own education.

Some students talked about what for them is an important rite of passage into Evergreen's teaching and learning culture: writing their own first self-evaluation. One person, for instance, described it in the following way:

Writing the self-evaluation was an interesting process. [It involved] trying to figure out what I had learned, what was important to me and what had changed. [My faculty] had recommended keeping a journal of your different impressions as you go along. I started to [write in it] but didn't sometimes. I think that [keeping up with it better] would have been real helpful. I'm trying to be a little more careful about it this quarter. The learning process is so gradual over the course of the quarter that you tend not to notice it, unless you're paying very close attention to how things were in the beginning and how things are now.

Doing the self-evaluation probably took me eight to ten hours, all things considered. That's as much time as I probably would have put into a final exam, or maybe even more. It seemed like a self-evaluation would be something you'd just sit down and whip out in a half hour. [But] I put a lot of work into mine.

New students also reflected on another rite of passage: the first time they wrote a faculty evaluation. They generally agreed that this was even more difficult than writing their first self-evaluation. This is because their more conventional educational background taught them not to question or comment upon the performance of their faculty, especially not to their faces. "Doing the faculty evaluation was a little more awkward [than my own self-evaluation] because there were some criticisms I wanted to make of [my faculty], and it was really uncomfortable for me to say, 'This is what I liked about you, but I really didn't like this.'

It was different to be in a situation where I'm on the same level as my faculty and I'm allowed to say, 'You'd be a better faculty if you did this, this and this.' It was awkward not understanding what my role was, what I was basically allowed to say, what was permissible for me to say.

Interestingly, new students generally expressed worry over possibly being too critical of their faculty, even when their comments were intended to be constructive.

Academically, things were fine with [my seminar leader]. My problems [with him] were more with the way he presented himself. I felt like he was such a wonderfully supportive, wonderfully informed, wonderfully interesting person to talk with on a one-on-one basis, but when addressing the group he was so uncomfortable. Even in seminar where there were only 20 of us, it was really awkward for him. It was just frustrating because the awkwardness became more important than what he was trying to convey to us. So that was my basic criticism of him: I felt like that detracted from some of the things we could have been getting out of the program. He was uncomfortable to put himself out there, and speak up or whatever. Basically that's what I said in my evaluation of him. He was an excellent faculty. He had so many wonderful things to say. He had incredible insight.

Along with the many positive stories about evaluation experiences, students also related some that were critical. Almost none of these, however, were critical of the narrative evaluation practice itself. Instead, they were targeted at the way a particular faculty member was perceived to have mishandled the process. This is especially true of new students. They often still held an idealized image of the narrative evaluation process and so, upon receiving their first written evaluation, were disappointed if it did not live up to their expectations.

I had a problem with one professor in my Core program last year. He seemed to me to be pretty lazy. He didn't even read my paper. It was a 19-page paper and I didn't really feel that he even read it until one of my other professors who did read it said it was well done. So, I was upset about that. I thought that the teachers would spend more time [on this].

While some might feel that this new student was suffering from a case of naivete, it is significant that he placed such great store on this Evergreen practice. To him (and to many others with whom I have talked) narrative evaluations are highly symbolic. In a very resonant, meaningful way, they symbolize to students the essence of the way the college works and what it stands for.

E. FACULTY INITIATION STORIES

Just as new students are initiated into Evergreen's institutional culture through a variety of novel experiences, so too are incoming faculty. Participants in both camps often tell of having been either frustrated or inspired by many of the same institutional customs, practices and routines when they first came and were trying to learn the ropes. This correlation is especially interesting given the fact that my interviewees were drawn broadly from among those who currently participate in the everyday academic life of the college. As a result, the present chapter not only contains initiation stories from contemporary students, it also includes similar accounts from faculty who joined the college at different points over its 24 years of existence.

One of the most striking correlations between the first on-campus experiences of incoming students and faculty is the fact that both recount going through a similar initiation scenario. Individuals in both groups bump up against, become aware of and are forced to come to grips with certain distinct features of Evergreen's culture as a matter of course.

Founders' experiences:

Even founding faculty encountered many of the same features of the culture and consequently underwent the same basic sequence of experiences as newcomers do today. For example, contemporary students, along with faculty from all eras, are generally struck by the unusual amount of flexibility and ambiguity at Evergreen during their first few weeks on campus. Reflecting on his own initiation into the college's then-nascent culture, one founding faculty member remarked on what he found when he arrived some 20 years earlier. "There was not a well-defined vision that everybody had to buy into. When we got here there was lots of room for everybody. There was a lot of discussion."

Much of the flexibility and ambiguity that the founders encountered was due, of course, to the fact that the culture had not yet been invented in most respects. This is what the founding faculty had been brought in to accomplish. They went about their task by having, as noted above, "a lot of discussion."

What kinds of things did the founders discuss? Lots of issues, of course, but especially fundamental questions concerning what an Evergreen education should consist of as well as how a school with such an idealistic purpose should operate. Such fundamental value-based concerns are still staple fare among new students who often end up trying to re-invent the academic world on a small scale within their respective programs every year.

The founding faculty also wrestled over a variety of other matters pertinent to the creation of their institution's culture. Among these was envisioning the norms, values and learning experiences which would be implicit in an Evergreen style education. A couple of examples follow:

We talked about whether we ought to be an upper division and graduate institution on the premise that what we were going to do would require so much from students that we weren't certain that freshmen and sophomores would be able to do it, whether they would be emotionally and experientially prepared.

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We decided as we went along that one of the things we wanted to do was attract students who had already had some life experience and were more ready and better ready to start studying seriously than typical college freshman at age 18. We talked through, argued and hassled that kind of stuff.

One characteristic of the college from the beginning was a decentralized, nonautocratic management style. What this meant, for the most part, was that there was no one individual who assumed command. Instead, decisions were made consensually. This practice helps to account for the flexible and ambiguous culture that has evolved here.

We didn't vote in those days. Our decision-making model was primarily consensual. We talked about whether to vote and finally agreed to try to reach decisions by consensus. We didn't do it absolutely, and frankly I think that in those cases where we didn't come to a pretty clear consensus, at least it was clear that the vast majority of us felt a certain way. I can remember having that kind of conversation.

Because of the adhocratic nature of the way things are done around Evergreen, there are often differing perspectives on any given topic. Such is and always has been the case, even with respect to such fundamentals as the very charter of the college. In the words of one founding faculty member, "As you talk to people and read some of the documents about what our official charter was you will find some disagreements about what it actually said, whether we were mandated to be different, or required to do this or that."

As a result of the flexible, ambiguous culture of the college, members have devised strategies and perspectives that allow them to work effectively within a loosely structured and ever-changing organizational framework. One such strategy is to assume one is free to be creative until proven otherwise.

The feeling that we operated on was that we had permission. The way I characterize it is that the charter and the notion that were enacted and put into practice when we came was much like the Massachusetts Bay Charter. It didn't tell us what to do particularly; it just told us to go do something good.

Working to create a new kind of college within this flexible though ambiguous environment had a discernible impact on the founders. On the one hand, those with whom I have talked said they enjoyed the freedom afforded them by this flexibility and the opportunity to create a new world. The flip side of this inspirational high, however, was frustration due to the large amount of ambiguity involved in the project. It was difficult at times for the group to determine whether they were still on track due to the lack of pre-existing models for this sort of school. Additional burdens included pressure from interested outsiders as well as participants' internal desire to create something truly special, something that reflected their ideal

image of what teaching and learning should be about. Together, these factors sometimes led to intense stress. The extent of this stress is revealed in an experience account:

When people came from the outside to study us and to watch us and to check us out, it often felt like an intrusion. It felt like they were getting in our way. They kept asking us questions that we couldn't answer. We didn't know what we were going to do about foreign language studies, [for example]. We didn't know. Christ, we did not [have the answers for] any of that kind of stuff.

On more than one occasion, the stress level stemmed from concern over not making a mistake which would have major ramifications later on. Sometimes, members were afraid that they might be in over their heads. "It was a scary thing [the founding]. We were not so enamored of ourselves that we thought that there was no way we could flop. [We didn't feel] so gung ho that we just knew Evergreen was going to work."

At one point in the planning year, for example, participants felt anxious about how to proceed because they were divorced from the reality of teaching students and thus being able to gauge the impact of their innovative ideas. In the words of one founder,

After several months we started to go crazy because we didn't have any students. This was a quite distinct element in the academic culture that I remember. People who came to the planning faculty meetings were teachers, serious teachers. That was a part of how we defined ourselves to ourselves. I remember that after several months of our not teaching, sitting around tables at these meetings, planning this stuff, and writing position papers, and arguing these issues we started to get a little weird because we didn't have that contact with students.

We said, 'OK, we're going to bring in some high school seniors from around the place. We're going to have these little seminars and talk about this wonderful vision.' We were excited, but [these high school students] didn't rush to our model with open arms. They didn't decide that we were the 'new day.' In fact someone decided that they weren't enthusiastic.

God, we were bummed out. We were crushed. Oh God, we were depressed. We just knew that we were going to crash. We just knew that we were out in left out. We thought it could collapse. It [might] not work. In fact, we knew that unconventional and sort of strange innovative places didn't have a very successful history in this country.

The process by which the founders succeeded in creating a new kind of alternative college, as revealed in the above story, is that of "trial and transformation." This organizing principle is at the heart of Evergreen's culture. In a very real way, it continues to affect teaching and learning to this day. Referred to by one founder as "hassling through," this process begins by acknowledging dissatisfaction with an existing reality. In the case of the founding, it began with the realization that higher education was in trouble and that a radical alternative was called for. As the founders enacted it, this process proceeded by imagining potential scenarios for the college and then somehow trying them on for size. An important vehicle for this social process was the morning planning meeting.

What would happen was we would come in for a meeting the first thing in the morning and there would be a topic, for a week or some period of time, until we had hammered it out. I remember when we talked about the issue of whether the college was going to stand 'in loco parentis'. A major figure in educational psychology around the country came and made a presentation to us. He argued that not only was the trend among colleges and universities around the country away from in loco parentis, but the times that we were living in seemed to suggest that it wasn't the approach to take. We talked and argued and struggled about whether to do that.

I remember discussions about admissions. There were some of us who wanted totally open admissions. I, for example, had taught for years in a community college where you had open admission, and that made a lot of sense to me. So I supported and argued for the idea for open admission. Some said, 'No. Hell no! We want high caliber students. We want students who have succeeded and who will do well. We're a brand new college and we need to begin to with a high success rate, and the way to get that is to get kids with fat GPAs and high SATs.'

And, of course, the state [was always] peering over our shoulders. As I remember it, the admissions people, the president and the deans inquired about how far we could go toward open admissions. So we slowly evolved the policy we began with. It was that you had to have a 2.5, or be in the upper half of your graduating class in high school, or be able to get somebody to make a convincing case that you ought to be admitted. That's how we started. We found that the state wouldn't allow us to go the whole way to open admissions.

It is important to bear in mind the social context in which this "hassling through" process which led to intense experiences of "trial and transformation" took place. In the words of one founder,

We were a tiny enclave. The total campus community in that first year was maybe a hundred people, including custodians and maintenance folks and all of that. The builders [of the school] were an independent corporation, but the rest of us were a community. We were together all of the time. We would come to work at 9:00 in the morning and leave at 6:15 or 6:30 and sometimes we would come back at 8:00 for three more hours. We would work from 9:00 to 5:00 and be at somebody's house at 9:00 for a dinner and dance. We were together a great deal and spent a lot of time working and playing as this little tiny island of people who were trying to do this thing.

In addition to helping the group work through the many difficult culture-creation matters it faced, hassling through was also used by the founders on an individual level. In this capacity, it facilitated many individual transformations. One such transformational high grew out of the imagining and planning a founder did for his first program.

Now I am talking about the planning year. I certainly found it very stimulating to be able to formulate an idea for what became an exciting interdisciplinary program. I was so pleased that a [colleague with a different background] on the planning faculty and I could work together so closely in designing this program. It was extremely stimulating to me to be able to develop a program that was close to what my vision was.

We had a team with an incredible range of experience, and we were dealing with an academic program that did span these two [disciplinary areas]. For me, that was an incredible opportunity. It was a fulfillment.

As with other cultural patterns at the college, it is interesting to note that this hassling through scenario can be seen today in the experiences of new students getting grounded in Evergreen culture for the first time.

While the hassling through strategy often enabled the founders to experience a heady personal transformation, it sometimes stymied them. For instance, hassling through could lead to a prolonged experience of "trial", sometimes without a complementary "transformation" following it. For some, this experience created a feeling of alienation from others in the planning group.

During the planning year when we were discussing the whole image of the college and its curriculum, I often felt very alienated. I felt that the main focus in the language and almost in the ideology was of the people with a background in literature or in the humanities disciplines. I think it was difficult when we were trying to shape that curriculum to see how the [other areas] would fit in.

The strategy of hassling through was also perceived to be at the heart of the problem when the college sometimes fell short of meeting its stated goals. Some members would leave a planning meeting with a different set of understandings than did others. Such variance would not be discovered until much additional planning had occurred in small groups. Then the participants in the small groups, on occasion, felt let down by the others. For some, this was a bubble-bursting experience.

Before the end of the planning year, I felt like the college had not kept its commitment to people of color and a multicultural vision. When we talked about cultural diversity in the earliest stages it was in the middle of what we were going to do. It was at the very center of our vision to see a pluralistic world [and] to proceed from that assumption.

We got down the road a ways and it got to be time to design the first program. So we all ran off in little groups for days and weeks to design our programs. We came back together and presented our ideas and conceptions and so forth. We came back together and the designs didn't have squat in them [with regard to this multicultural vision]. There were a few texts by authors of color and a few images. I saw those designs and I said, 'Jesus Christ, where is it? You guys said this is a different place. There is a different vision here. This looks like the Cal Berkeley curriculum. This looks like San Jose State. Where are the cultural studies? Where are the ethnic studies? Where are the Africans? Where are the Asians?' Oh, God it was a mess, people got all uptight you know, and we struggled around.

The looseness of the hassling through process allowed participants the freedom to voice what was initially on their minds: the vision of a multicultural curriculum. The same flexibility and ambiguity, however, also made it possible for different small groups to imperceptibly stray from this ideal. Despite this setback, the same loose process enabled members

to find themselves once again. By hassling through some more, participants transformed a potential planning failure into a success story. Ultimately, a means was found to create one such multicultural program for the first teaching year. That this first program was a successful transformation can be gleaned from the following account:

What we did was change the world of the program. We limited the number of pink students who enrolled and put them in a distinct minority. There were about 20 pink students and the rest, about 30 or 40, were yellow, black, red, and brown. We wanted all of those students to experience a different world. A world that is a more accurate description of the nature of the whole world: namely that the groups we call 'minority groups' are actually the majority of folks in the world, not minorities. It's in Western countries that you have the reality of the world turned upside down with pink domination.

So we wanted to turn that around for students. It was terrific. It was tense and sometimes uncomfortable for everybody. People struggled and fought. But it was also very, very good. Our students experienced and learned things that they couldn't have gotten in any other way.

Initiation experiences of early teaching faculty:

The initiation experiences of Evergreen's early teaching faculty (those who came within the first three years of the college's operation) can also shed light on the school's contemporary culture. As was the case with the founders, the early experiences of these individuals reveal that they, too, have much in common with today's newcomers.

Many of the early teaching faculty were attracted to Evergreen because of its idealism and non-traditional approach to teaching and learning. They came with great expectations of the fertile environment they would find as well as visions of the exciting things that this would allow them to create. At the conceptual level, incoming faculty liked the innovative structure. "When I came here there were no specialty areas at all. There were no departments. I liked that myself. I thought that was important. I had been in schools where these existed, and I didn't like the separation. So I was very grateful."

The fact that I also obtained detailed, enthusiastic descriptions of what had been envisioned some 20 years after the fact from faculty who have been teaching here that same length of time is significant. For one thing, it suggests that these individuals still hold a deep belief in the Evergreen ideal, even though they have been living it on a daily basis for nearly two decades. On top of this, these descriptions reveal how consistent the culture has been. One such description follows:

Curriculum was made by faculty teams around themes and topics. Faculty [from different disciplines] joined these teams. The idea was that you brought your expertise to the coordinated effort. They wanted the disciplines to have an equal pull, so that if these programs started getting made there would be enough areas to go around. [This way, they would] have a sort of equal mix.

Along with idealism and excitement, however, there was also disillusionment and frustration. Interestingly, the trials that are said to have caused this disgruntlement occurred when these folks were newly arrived on campus and trying to deal with some of the unusual features of Evergreen's culture. In the words of one longtime faculty person,

I came the third year of the college. It was a very exhausting, lonely experience, being in these coordinated studies programs, having to represent [my discipline and a couple of others], trying to do it all, and trying to find something relevant to the topics that were going on.

My first program was very hard. I didn't think I was going to be able to stay here, because you had to do all the subjects. I mean I was into interdisciplinary studies, but I didn't actually want to have to learn the other disciplines. [When I came here], I had to learn them and teach them at the same time.

It was terrible. It was so hard. I was up all night, I never slept. I was always depressed. I never felt like I was doing anything right. I had to do seminars on Virginia Wolf and read all these novels and discuss them. I had to learn to read music, which I had always hated. I never could learn it before, so how was I going to learn it in one quarter at Evergreen? I went to the music teacher and I said, 'Look, I hate this, I'm not going to do this. You're the music teacher. You teach them how to read music. You can try to teach me, but I'm not going to teach them. It's stupid. I don't even know how to do it myself.' Then they would have these discussions with me, always bawling me out. You had to read a book a week and sometimes more than that because you're doing stuff for all the other programs, you know, [being] 'interdisciplinary'. So a book a week, plus make drawings, plus go to concerts.

We started reading Virginia Wolf and the seminar was finally going well. Something was going right. We hadn't gotten through the book when I said [to my students], 'I'm going to go off schedule. We're going to talk about this book for two weeks, and we'll read the rest when we get to it. If we don't get to it, I'm not going to worry about it.' One of the students called the coordinator of the program and squealed on me. [The coordinator] called me at 11:30 at night and bawled me out. He said, 'We have a covenant. We all agreed that we'd read a book a week, that we'd stay together, and we'd do the same thing.' I said, 'Well, I can't do it. Fire me, but I can't do it.'

In addition to giving us a rich description of the potential negative aspects of an Evergreen initiation scenario, this story also clearly reveals its underlying cause: the perception of structural rigidity and insensitivity to incoming individuals' needs due to a strict adherence to a particular way of doing things. This newcomer (like many others) was shocked to discover that her colleagues' everyday behavior did not necessarily reflect their idealistic rhetoric. Beyond this, she was disappointed to find that those who had been teaching here for some time seemed unaware of their cultural blinders.

Along with having their bubbles burst with regard to a possible gap between the school's rhetoric and its everyday reality, a number of longtime faculty recounted how their early teaching experiences here had a negative impact on their lives outside of class.

It was terrible. I mean the relationship I was in totally fell apart just like everyone else's in their first year. There were all these divorces. [My partner] left, just said 'forget this' and took off, back to [the East Coast]. I was all alone. It was just the worst year.

On the other hand, there was generally an upside to longtime faculty members' initiation experiences at Evergreen. More often than not, the nature of this upside correlates with the exhilarating experiences described by students, recent faculty, and even members of the founding faculty. In the majority of cases among all of these groups, the initiation experiences which people talk about most enthusiastically stem from their transformational encounters in academic programs. There is usually something magical, even mystical about these powerful and vitalizing occasions. One longtime faculty member even drew an analogy between her early upside experiences here and those of friends undergoing mystical instruction.

I worked very hard [my first year here]. There was something about it that was so new. It was like every day held a new challenge, a new problem. It felt like you were dealing with very important paradigms of learning every day. You were totally conscious. You never did anything out of habit because the situation didn't allow for it. There were no set patterns.

It was extraordinary. The only thing that comes close to [it] are letters I got from friends who had gone away to live in mystical communities where their ideas about what is valuable, what's good and bad, front and back, up and down were being purposefully broken down by their gurus so they could have a new life. I felt just the same.

Initiation experiences of faculty
from Evergreen's second decade:

My first program experience was heaven. It was not only a professional and intellectual holiday, I felt guilty accepting any pay it was so much fun. Other than my dissertation research, I do not think I read more, wrote more or felt so revitalized intellectually than my first year here.

What aspects of teaching at Evergreen contribute to newer faculty feeling as if their work here is "fun" or "heaven," much as is the case for the person quoted above? These factors can be found in the experience narratives of this segment of the faculty. Not surprisingly, many say that not feeling constrained by a rigid institutional structure is paramount to their enjoyment of teaching and learning at Evergreen. "My fun [when I first came] here was being totally confused as to who was teaching and who was learning. I think my students probably provoked more learning in me than I did in them. I am convinced of that. I am not beyond admitting that."

One of the clearest examples of this lack of institutional constraint is the fact that students and faculty are free to change roles, and may do so in ways that are not always clear to those involved. The fact that such an unusual, flexible and dynamic relationship is both valued and central to many participants' "Evergreen experience" is significant. A more

detailed description of how this characteristic may function in everyday life at the college can be gleaned from the following story:

Because my own training was very, very technical, I would be the first to admit that in literature, poetry and film I am just quasi-literate. Other than B-grade horror movies such as *Godzilla*, *Land of the Dead*, and that kind of stuff, I have no knowledge. Students with a lot of experience in reading literature, fiction and poetry [in my program] taught me.

They were, I think, intrigued by the fact that I did not know diddly. I read a lot. I went out and got stuff to help me understand it, such as one of those 'How to Know Poetry and Be a Nicer Person in Fourteen Days' books. I openly admitted to them that 'This is just not my area, but I'll be damned if I am not going to learn.'

They would often help me read out loud, showing me where to pause. I had two students in particular who were quite accomplished poetry fans. Clearly their knowledge was beyond mine. They took on the teacher role. 'Here is where you pause; here is where you inflect your voice; this is what we mean by meter," and that kind of stuff. There was one seminar in particular where they did this. I did not mind them [taking over here] as they were helping a lot of other people, too. What ensued was a pretty good argument over the relationship of meter to inflection. The whole class got into a really good discussion of definitions of meter, pace, reading. When we got done we realized we had fallen into a damn good seminar.

A second factor that becomes apparent here is the fact that, in order for this free-wheeling approach to work, students and faculty must be willing to give up their conventional status props. The faculty must be willing to admit vulnerability and to sometimes appear uninformed. By the same token, students must become responsible, active learners with a recognizable area of interest and expertise. Both must forego the anonymity that goes with their statuses in conventional institutions. Instead, they need to interact with one another on more authentic and individualized bases.

That such a dynamic, flexible interactional scenario actually occurs between students and faculty is revealed in the experience accounts of these recent faculty members.

I feel really honored that a lot of students noted in their evaluations of me that they often lost sight of who I really was. [Instead of thinking of me as a faculty member, they saw me as] just another learner with some different view points who helped guide them in their learning. I took that as the highest form of flattery.

Being able to form meaningful intellectual relationships with colleagues trained in other disciplines was also cited as an important source of gratification. Of course, this, too, stems from the dynamic, flexible environment found at Evergreen.

What I really enjoy about [teaching here] is the chance to work with other faculty outside of my own departmental specialty. That doesn't happen at most colleges (even teaching-based colleges) in the country. Faculty usually teach only with their departmental colleagues, if they teach with anybody at all. [In any case], they usually only

talk to departmental colleagues. And they often have extremely narrowly defined roles in which they must teach. So the chance to work with faculty outside my own area was tremendously appealing.

In addition to appreciating the freedom they have to structure their own teaching and learning relationships, individuals in this segment of the faculty also talked excitedly about being able to teach along their areas of interest. This opportunity was especially gratifying to those whose interests span conventional disciplinary lines. Such individuals often recounted how they had felt confined in the departmental settings where they had taught before coming here.

I was able to teach full time something that I had been teaching as an overload where I was. [I could also] create new programs around themes approached [in different ways]: from technical viewpoints, from policy viewpoints, from social science viewpoints, from impact on the consumer viewpoints, and so on, and so on. It was the thematic orientation of a whole curriculum that was just tremendously exciting compared to teaching, for example, the upper division course in this-that-or-the-other.

F. INITIATION SUMMARY

In the last chapter, I showed how students and faculty portray Evergreen as "a vital symbol of satisfaction, transformation and self-discovery" in the stories they tell during their discovery phase. Once they arrive on campus, however, newcomers enter a new experience phase, that of initiation. This shift in circumstances generally predicates a change in the way they view the college. While the extent of the change can be subtle or dramatic, their perception of the school cannot help but be altered by the fact that they have become insiders (and, as a consequence, are now more aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses) rather than outsiders wishfully looking in. Over the course of their initiation phase, these new members usually abandon their singularly idealistic view of Evergreen. In its place they evolve more complex and sometimes contradictory images of the institution that are grounded in, and reflective of, their new, sometimes chaotic, and often unexpected everyday life experience.

By examining newcomers' initiation narratives, we can get a close-up view of how their early experiences on campus may alter their image of Evergreen. Undoubtedly the most prominent change in this respect is that they are less likely to view the college uncritically as the symbol of a perfect academic world. In fact, over the course of their initiation phase, incoming students and faculty critically evaluate many of their first-time experiences on campus to see if these tally with their original discovery image of what it would be like to be at Evergreen.

An important outcome of this informal assessment process is that newcomers construct two initiation scenarios to make sense of their on campus experience. Unlike the discovery scenario which was singularly positive and idyllic, these are polar opposites. On the one hand, a positive, upbeat initiation scenario is revealed. Here accounts portray incoming students or faculty members as finding that Evergreen reality is indeed reflective of their dis-

covery image. In addition to this positive scenario, however, is another more negative one. The basic difference between the two is that newcomers make the opposite discovery in the second scenario. Instead of having their ideal image of the college borne out by their initiation experiences, they find the world of teaching and learning at Evergreen to be frustratingly similar to that from which they were trying to escape in other more conventional institutions.

Which of these two initiation scenarios becomes meaningful for a particular student or faculty member often depends on three semantic variables. These are time, place and a given newcomer's perception of how she/he is treated by such representatives of the college as faculty and staff. One variable, for example, is time. This is evident in so far as two time periods figure especially prominently: pre-program time and program time. A second variable is place. In this respect, two campus settings are especially significant. These are administrative sites (e.g., various Evergreen offices that deal with students and their needs and problems) and academic settings (e.g., various coordinated studies program arenas including program seminars, evaluations, etc.).

In addition to time and place, the third key variable stems from newcomers' perceptions of the interactional styles of authority figures on campus. Both students and faculty deem the quality of their relations with these established "representatives" of Evergreen culture, traditions and practices to be symbolic. Students, for example, perceive that these symbolic representatives may interact with them in one of two fundamentally different ways. One of these "interactional paradigms" is perceived to be positive. It was metaphorically described as a way that some authority figures have of "putting a human face on the organization." This highly personalized approach to human relations was said to be practiced by college representatives who empathize with students' needs and concerns. It is thought to be symbolized in their caring attitude toward students, what one member characterized as putting themselves in students' shoes. The second interactional paradigm was cynically compared to the often frustrating organizational inflexibility which members have experienced when "dealing with the government." Those who are perceived to practice this approach to dealing with students are perceived as rigid and manipulative, and as placing their own agendas above the needs and concerns of students.

Similar metaphoric images and initiation scenarios may be found in the stories of faculty members. By examining these, our understanding of Evergreen culture becomes richer still. While both students and faculty identified the same two initiation scenarios, only long-time faculty had the depth of experience here to recognize the significance of the negative pattern. The reason for this is that even some of the founding faculty experienced this particular way of doing things in their early days on campus. Though they may not approve of it, this pattern can become "invisible" to longtime members. As a result, it is most apparent to new initiates who are often surprised to discover it exists.

One founding faculty person referred to this negative scenario as "hassling through." According to him, it begins when an idealistic new member is under the impression that peers and authority figures share the same idealistic values that are communicated in Evergreen's official rhetoric. After proceeding on this assumption for a while, however, it suddenly becomes apparent that this is not the case. When this occurs, the newcomer feels set back, undone, or even betrayed. From the perspective of a new initiate, the college in such instances has not lived up to its ideals.

From both student and faculty stories, we also learn that there can be a positive outcome to such seemingly negative occurrences. Along with the feeling of being set back, hassling through has another side. I have labeled this "trial and transformation." It entails struggling with the problem(s) at hand until a resolution can be found, all the while believing in the rightness of one's cause as well as in the potential of the school to live up to its rhetorical self-image.

So, what does all of this go to show? Four lessons are especially apparent. The first is that Evergreen's teaching and learning culture is deeply embedded and amazingly consistent over the life span of the college. The next is that a similar initiation phase exists for students as well as for faculty. The third point is that the same cultural characteristics that are perceived to be positive by some may be viewed negatively by others.

The fourth lesson is more difficult to describe. It is that the initiation phase is a critical time period for students as well as faculty. Newcomers at this point seek some kind of confirmation or disconfirmation of their original belief in Evergreen as a liberating and transformative symbol. Depending on their decision, incoming members' level of engagement with, and the success of their participation in, Evergreen's teaching and learning culture may be enhanced or diminished. The same is true of their morale. Which outcome prevails depends on which scenario, the positive or the negative, newcomers believe characterizes their Evergreen reality. This perception, in turn, is dependent on another factor: the complex of institutional practices and traditions new participants encounter in their early days on campus. If these enhance their self-esteem and contribute to their feelings of being supported in their journey here, then new students and faculty tend to adopt a positive image of the college and its culture. Conversely, the reverse is also true. If Evergreen practices and traditions do not seem to facilitate feelings of support and self-worth, then newcomers are likely to construct a more negative view of the college and its culture.

CHAPTER IV.

STUDENTS' STORIES AND REFLECTIONS ON THE THIRD EXPERIENCE PHASE: PARTICIPATION

The format of the present chapter differs from that of the previous two. Whereas each of these were designed to be independent wholes, this chapter marks the beginning of a two-part sequence. It highlights students' stories of their own participation experiences in Evergreen's teaching and learning culture. Chapter V, the sequel, treats this same topic for the most part, but with an important twist: the vantage point has changed. Instead of featuring students' narratives of their own participation experiences, Chapter V presents faculty members' observational accounts of their students' involvements during their participation phase. From this multiple perspective approach, a richer, more valid picture of the teaching and learning culture at Evergreen and the impact it can have on students appear.

Located between the students' initiation and separation experience phases, their participation experience phase continues for the longest period of time. It begins to take shape for individual students after they have come to grips with their initiation experiences. Once they get over their surprise at how Evergreen meets, exceeds or falls short of their idealized discovery images, students I have interviewed tell of turning their principal attentions to figuring out how to participate effectively in the college's teaching and learning culture. More specifically, they start to focus on what it is they want to learn as well as how they can do this during their stay here. As a result, their participation stories and reflections highlight those aspects of Evergreen's culture in which they necessarily become immersed as they navigate their way through the institution and put their careers together here.

Because of the nature of their focus at this point, it is not surprising that students' participation experience stories are principally set in academic arenas and concern activities that are commonplace in the school's teaching and learning culture. In general, this means that most of the action in these tales transpires in coordinated studies programs. Though group and individual contracts are portrayed as playing a significant role, coordinated studies programs (along with the seminars and evaluation experiences which occur therein) are the most prominent settings.

In addition to revealing cultural traditions, practices and ways of doing things, members' participation accounts also reveal an interesting aspect of the enculturation process they are undergoing. The narratives and reflections which follow show that students are not just being instructed in academic knowledge. They are, in effect, also learning to become more highly independent and individualized learners. Instead of worrying about trying to "fit in" to the requirements of a departmental major, students here find themselves expanding their visions of the nature of teaching and learning as well as focusing on its potential intrinsic rewards. As a result, many of their accounts highlight ways in which they are learning about, and often becoming excited by, their own learning processes. In many cases, this expanded conception of education seems to have a positive effect on a student's sense of self, especially with respect to feeling more aware of how they may choose to live and what they may hope to accomplish in their lives.

At this point, I would like to say a few words about the organization of the rest of this chapter. The first section (A) presents a selection of general comments from students about their perceptions of some of the animating characteristics of Evergreen's teaching and learning culture. Sections B through E then focus on specific, often-mentioned settings and practices that are symbolically significant to participants. Finally, Section F concludes this chapter with stories that highlight students' perceptions of the long term impact of participating in Evergreen's distinctive educational approach.

A. AN OVERVIEW OF DISTINCTIVE QUALITIES THAT STUDENTS ATTRIBUTE TO EVERGREEN'S TEACHING AND LEARNING CULTURE

A number of significant themes are evident in the expressions that follow. While some of these appear in this experience phase for the first time, others have cropped up earlier as well. Regardless of their points of origin, however, they are all viewed by students as affecting the quality of their participation experiences.

Learning is largely self-initiated and self-motivated:

One of the beautiful things about Evergreen is that whatever you want to do you can. That's a real important key to the learning. It's completely self-motivated.

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There are varying degrees of faculty support for your self-motivation. I've had faculty who were very supportive of me. I'd say, 'This sounds kind of interesting,' and they'd be like, 'Go do it then. Here's blah, blah, blah and "x" amount of resources.' Evergreen is very good at saying, 'Here are the resources if this is what you want to do.' You know, 'Here's the library. Here's how to use the library. Here's how to use specific things in the library. Here's [a list of] people in the community you can go talk to. Here's [a list of] other people on campus you can go talk to.'

You are responsible for your own learning:

What's really exciting about Evergreen is the fact of taking responsibility [for your own learning]. You may feel put out for a while. You may feel like Evergreen isn't as good a school as it promotes itself to be, but you can go so much farther this way. You can make the decision to go someplace else and take extra courses to support your study. Or you can say, 'I really want to focus on this one thing. Please help me figure out how to do it.' You can actually do what you want to do. You don't have to be in any disciplinary lines. That's what's good about Evergreen. It gets very frustrating [sometimes], but in retrospect this is one of it's stronger points.

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I've thought about this a lot. It seems to me that when you are responsible for how well you do, you put higher expectations on yourself than even the faculty really want to put on you.

Evergreen facilitates interactive learning:

Group dynamics skills [come from] working with people on a project in a group situation, seminar skills [from] talking within a group and learning in a dialectical [way]. [Evergreen's approach is] a form of teaching and being taught by other people. [This is very different from the] 'banking knowledge' model where you sit there [in class] and get filled up with everything. [Here, you're in] a dialectical process [where you're actively] talking and figuring things out about your experience and trying to get some information or knowledge. Hands-on studies are another thing. I feel as if I'm sounding like the catalog, but I think the people at Evergreen do a good job.

Supportive relationships with faculty are a key element of learning here:

The relationship that goes on between students and teachers is different and special. [For one thing], I think a lot of teachers want to hear from their students. [They] want to know what their students think. And, I think a lot of times, teachers learn from their students.

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It's nice to have teachers paying attention to you and wanting you to learn. That is their main objective, to want you to learn so that you understand the material and not just [manage] to get through the book. I think this is different from other schools. [There] you might hear the professor say that to get credit for a class you need to get from point A to point B. Whether you understand [the material] or not, you need to get through that book. At Evergreen the emphasis is more on the learning of the material. Even though you still have to work to learn the material, it is much nicer to have teachers that really care whether you understand it and [are willing] to help you with that. For instance, we had a study group at a professor's house to [help us] prepare for a test. She invited the whole class to go over there to study and ask questions. It was nice to have the opportunity to do that. It was helpful.

It was fun to be over there at the professor's house, and [it felt good] to know that she actually cared how well we did on this test. She [also] asked us for help in making the test and finding out what we thought was important in the text and in what we learned.

##

The kind of personal contact you can have with your faculty if you initiate it [is amazing]. The faculty are so open to helping students out, giving them advice and suggest-

ing modes of research that can really develop students' academic learning to its utmost potential. It saves you a lot of dead ends.

##

[There's an important] key to learning here: finding a faculty member with whom you work really well. What I always tell people about Evergreen is to look for faculty [to work with and] not programs. It doesn't matter what the faculty teach, as long as there is someone that you connect with and that you can learn from. So long as their style really complements your style you can learn anything. It doesn't matter what the subject is. I think that's very important.

Cultural differences are felt to be important:

There is an obsession with multiculturalism [here], but I wouldn't say this is a multicultural campus at all. It seems like [faculty and administrators] have created an environment [for this to happen], but there are not a lot of minority students here, [though], apparently there are more this year than in the past. I think it's a noble ambition and I think they should keep it up.

##

The faculty seem very conscientious about trying to understand different cultural perspectives and the role of culture in people's world views.

##

In a way there's sort of an irony about multiculturalism. Multiculturalism could turn into separatism very easily, I think, and in a sort of reactionary way. People could just stress the importance of their individual cultural backgrounds so much, that they end up differentiating themselves from others. I don't think that's real constructive. I think that the real emphasis should be put on the role of dialogue and sensitivity in human relationships, and not on manufacturing mechanisms to supposedly express multiculturalism.

##

The whole problem is that we get far away from the fact that it's humanity for its own sake that's important. [Instead], we've become structured and divided into our supposed groups. This sort of irks me.

##

Upweek is one way [to enhance multicultural understanding], but it's not mandatory. I think that if the instructors tried to schedule around Upweek, so that it would be as if the students were attending class, then it could help. But from my experience, Upweek is voluntary and students aren't attending. I think, though, that if people were

required to go, they'd resent it. Perhaps the instructors could work it in and then it still wouldn't be mandatory, but it would be encouraged so that you could get a good evaluation, just like going to class. If it was worked into the curriculum, then it would seem mandatory. Because they don't work it in and it's optional, people say, 'I have other more important things to do, so I won't go.'

##

I think cultural diversity and taking an interdisciplinary approach [are related]. It's all about seeking other opinions, listening to other people and coming up with models and mechanisms that work for all the people involved. I think that for the interdisciplinary approach to be complete it has to embrace other cultures. I think you can have interdisciplinary structure without the cultural diversity aspect, but it is not complete.

Evergreen's interdisciplinary approach sets learning free:

What I like about Evergreen is the interdisciplinary approach. To me that means you have a specific goal or a specific field that you are working on, but you are [also] going to work on it in the context of a different field. A good example of that is that I was in a video production class and at the same time I was doing an ornithology contract. The outcome was that I produced an ornithology film. 'Interdisciplinary' means to me that you don't have blinders on and therefore ignore things around you.

##

Before I applied [to Evergreen], I really didn't understand the significance of interdisciplinary studies. I [only] realized that after I got here. [Now] it is definitely important to me. I guess [that's] because I've found out the effectiveness of interdisciplinary studies and studying things on a more holistic level, not just in academic studies, but [in] a lot of different subjects, like scientific exploration. [Another example was] being involved in a study doing wetland delineation in the spring of 1988. This required tying different sciences like botany, soil sciences and hydrology [together] to get a more holistic view of the wetlands.

The amount of freedom here can be overwhelming:

[Freedom] is something that can be really overwhelming at Evergreen. There is so much freedom between different subjects. You don't have to choose a major, so it is really easy to go out and take a little of everything you want. All of a sudden, you are at a 160 credits and none of it is high-level learning.

##

It is [important to be] conscious of what you are doing and how it is going to apply toward your future, instead of just going along for the ride quarter after quarter. It's really being aware of what you are doing at the time [you are doing it]. Even just hav-

ing a plan, having some sort of foresight [is helpful]. It's so easy to just sail along taking what you want [at the time]. It's kind of frustrating when you look back and none of it fits together.

Questioning is a virtue:

One thing that the faculty really encourage you to do is to question and analyze and draw your own conclusions, and not just accept a package that is handed to you.

Sometimes things inexplicably "fall apart" at Evergreen:

By the third quarter, a class [I was in] started to fall apart. This happens here a lot but it just isn't talked about very often. I don't know exactly what happens, but something does. Sometimes the classes just don't work, and [this becomes even more apparent in Spring]. Spring quarter is always odd anyway unless you have a very strong group.

B. STUDENTS' PROGRAM PARTICIPATION EXPERIENCES

It is not surprising to learn that coordinated studies programs figure prominently in the lives of Evergreen students. Of greater interest, however, is identifying the aspects of these academic programs that are important to students. The stories, reflections and comments that follow provide insights into what students do and do not value with regard to teaching and learning in a program setting.

What role do these academic programs play in members' stories? Most frequently, they are presented as catalysts for learning in a very broad sense. In retrospect, much of what is learned that is perceived to be valuable is a holistic blend of curricular and extracurricular activities and experiences. In fact, much of what students often view as having been special occurred outside of a formal classroom setting and on their "own time."

Of the animating characteristics that fit this description, one in particular stands out: a sense of community. According to those I interviewed, a strong feeling of connectedness among program participants enhances the quality of their Evergreen experience. For one thing, such feelings of community inspire people to want to work together collaboratively. The importance attached to community, as well as the role it plays, can be seen in the following story which comes from a senior who attended a program called "Habitats":

The cohesiveness in 'Habitats' really increased when we started doing our spring project. That's when people really got to know each other and love each other, I think. Everyone really started to bond by doing a project outside of class. [This is what made] it start to become more real and valuable. [We started doing] extracurricular

social activities (going to parties; going out to have beer) and talking about what we were learning about. I guess by communicating with each other we as a class networked about different job opportunities or what kinds of things we were doing in the summer, what kinds of jobs we were getting, what kinds of skills from 'Habitats' we were using in our jobs, that kind of thing. It's funny, I got a boyfriend and four close friends from that program. Not bad, not bad. [The sense of community in this program] just carried over into the summer and we just kept hanging out. People from 'Habitats' still get together [two years later] and have parties. Through the year-long program experiences, I think, you do develop a culture and a bonding.

Several factors contributed to making "Habitats" program culture appear special to participants. These included personal diversity, on the one hand, plus a shared interest in things environmental, on the other hand. These two characteristics combined to create a cohesive program.

The age was really variable. We were all interested in environmental sciences and environmental ethics and what is and was going on within the logging community here. It's a real localized problem that's affecting the nation. It's a problem and an exemplification of our management of resources. People that go [to school] here live in logging communities. [Because of this], we have firsthand experience and are able to talk to [these people].

There are certain kinds of program experiences that are perceived to have had a significant impact on students' lives. The following example is representative of what I heard a number of times from students. In the example that follows, the learning that has transpired is perceived to be particularly significant because, in addition to being theoretical and "preparatory," there was also an opportunity to apply what had been learned in the classroom. Furthermore, the application of classroom knowledge was made meaningful insofar as it was done collaboratively, for a "real world" client, and in a manner that fit with students' values.

It was exciting. In the spring of 1988, our faculty was contacted by the City of Tumwater to do a wetlands delineation study to figure out the restrictions on the new laws of developing wetlands according to D.O.E.'s [Department of Ecology's] laws. About 30 students went out and did this study. I was involved in doing plant identification. We went out and identified the plants using the D.O.E.'s chart to see what kinds of plants were there.

We [ended up producing] a professional report. The student involvement [included] pumping out data. Then each [program] section would write the discussion of their material and try to tie it into laws. Then we would split up and decide what other aspects we wanted to concentrate on in completing the full report. [Toward the end], we were running out of time, so [other] people volunteered to retype the rest of it. [But ultimately], the report was written by the students.

It was really exciting. It was probably one of the most enriching experiences I had at Evergreen just because it's real and it's tangible. It's also marketable, which is getting down to the meat of it, I guess. I have the opportunity to do something like this again

this coming spring. I'd like to [do it to] try to firm up the skills I've gotten from that [first] report and [from participating in] another wetlands survey.

Students also reflected on other animating characteristics which made their program experiences more compelling and meaningful. One such characteristic that was mentioned on a number of occasions was feeling engaged by what transpired within one's program. An example of the importance students may attach to such a sense of engagement can be seen in the comments of a science-oriented sophomore. In talking about his freshman Core program experience, he emphasized that he had been more excited by it than he thought he would. As a consequence, he felt very engaged by what he was studying. He relates the positive impact that this program experience had on him:

I learned more [in my Core program] than I had expected to. Last year I expected that [my Core program] would be a joke, just something I needed to get over with my requirements for graduating, the equivalent to other schools where you have to take so much history and English. [But] I really got into the history. I just really became involved with it. I was immersed in the learning process of local history and how it relates to the way the world is today. It was quite interesting looking at it from many different perspectives, not only the historical, but the history you learn from reading literature and watching films. And even [learning about] natural history from looking at glacial till and markings and of geology as well as plants and birds and other things like that. So it was nice.

Continuing to muse on the value of Core programs, he noted that he now can see how they help incoming students to expand their view of the world. He sees the Core experience as an opportunity for new students to gain a more holistic, integrated and interesting view of the world.

I think [Core programs are] a much better way to introduce requirements and to round out a student [than the way most schools do this]. If I had gone to any other school, I would have probably gone into the sciences right away. But I think I needed to take that Core program to round myself. [I got] to learn about other things that science deals with every day but really doesn't understand. I got to look at it from a different perspective than just the scientific perspective.

When I asked this student if he thought that this kind of interdisciplinary learning would help him, he responded,

Oh, yes, I think so. I think that my ethics with science [have grown]. [I've become aware of] the things that science can do and the things that science should do and the difference between these. I have come to a realization that a lot of things that science does aren't necessarily correct. I think I needed to hear that, to work on that [perspective] and to come up with it myself.

One student made a number of positive comments about a program she had attended called "The American Dream?" In general, she appreciated the dynamic culture of the program. What stood out most in her mind, however, was the way she felt "stretched" by the faculty's expectations for the students.

[What made 'The American Dream?'] the most 'academic' class I've ever been in were the kinds of discussions and the expectations of the faculty for the students. It was expected that the students were very committed to what they were doing. [It was expected that you] were there to study, and it was assumed that you studied 40 hours a week. It was assumed that you were putting a lot of effort in, that the class was your entire focus. Most classes don't assume that. Most classes assume that you have other things going on in your life, that you have jobs and everything. It's nice to have someone assume that you can live up to the challenge they're giving you.

Students also felt challenged and stretched by the faculty in this program because of a practice they employed, final examinations with a twist.

[One] nice thing about 'The American Dream?' was that, at the end of the quarter, we would have finals. These contained questions that pertained to the material we dealt with throughout the whole quarter. It was a way to tie everything together and synthesize it. It wasn't a situation where you either passed or failed. It was just, you know, 'Here's this question, go write on it, and give us your papers.'

As is apparent in the above story, the nature of a practice may not be as important as how the practice is perceived. Because some students in this program do not view the final examinations as potentially undermining, they feel free to use them in a way that supports their own learning. That this is the case can be seen from the continuation of the account:

The best thing about [the final examinations in this program] was that there was just no pressure. There was pressure, but it wasn't the usual kind of [competitive] pressure. It was a pressure to do the best you could rather than like, 'You will fail if you don't do this right.' There was no failure involved, at least for me and a lot of the other students who did it. It was not threatening. I know some people who had anxiety produced by it, but it didn't do that to me at all.

By and large I heard many more enthusiastic comments and stories from students about their program experiences than otherwise. In those instances in which their program-related comments reflected frustration and/or disappointment, participants usually emphasized that they had also found something of value in the experience. This kind of "balanced" point of view even came from those who had experienced a traumatic experience. One example of this phenomenon comes from a student who participated in a program which became dysfunctional and was disbanded. In Evergreen parlance, it "broke up." Even though the experience was traumatic, this student felt she had had a valuable learning experience. "[One of my programs] was just fascinating. It was the 'dream-come-true program' for everyone in that program. I would say that 99.9% of the people were there because that was where they wanted to be above anyplace else."

Despite a strong desire on the part of many to be in this program, it seems to have had some difficulties from the beginning.

There were [student] concerns over the book list [generated by the faculty]. The first thing we did when we got together was discuss how we were going to read 28 books

in ten weeks. We were not talking about short books here. We were talking about 350 pages at least. [Even so], they were all fascinating books.

[During] our first class meeting, the faculty put a question on the board, 'How do you read 28 books in ten weeks? Come back in an hour.' So we went and discussed it [in small groups]. Some of us said, 'Well, I'm going to set up my schedule specifically so that I have enough time to do the reading.' Other people said, 'I'm going to choose the books I really want to read for the week. I'm not going to read all of them.' Other people said, 'I'm going to read parts of books' and others said, 'I'm just going to try to do my best.'

Interestingly, this kind and level of confusion continued. It ultimately reinforced students' inability to reach consensus every time they hit problems in evolving the program's culture.

It was very interesting because people would discuss what they were going to do and we would spend all of our seminars on how we were going to read the books and get together on the information. Most of our seminars were spent doing that, especially after the sixth week [of the quarter] when everything fell apart. There was no class, basically, after the seventh week. In seminar, it seemed a large percentage of the time was spent talking about [our frustrations. This included stuff like], 'I'm dissatisfied because I can't read enough,' or 'I'm dissatisfied because I'm trying really hard and feeling like I'm getting nowhere,' or 'I'm dissatisfied because we can't ever seem to get together.' [Another thing, either] I or other people would pose suggestions, such as, 'Well, let's focus on these two books this week,' and it just wouldn't work for some reason. We wouldn't all focus on those books or people wouldn't commit to it.

According to my interviewees, a large part of the problem was that students did not feel that they had been given a workable program framework by the faculty. The students felt that, while the faculty wanted them to evolve the direction the program took in large measure, the faculty had not given them the tools they needed to do this effectively.

It was as if the faculty had said, 'Well here, this is the program. Now you take it in your own hands and make it what you want it to be.' And none of us knew how to handle that. Nobody was prepared for that, and nobody was willing to just say, 'Well, OK, our seminar is only going to read this one book per week.' [The faculty] would have argued with us about this, but it would have been acceptable because the attitude was that it was our class to do with what we wanted. This [approach] would have worked really well if they'd given us some structure to work within, [but it didn't feel as if they gave us that structure], not from my point of view, and not from some other students' points of view that I'm familiar with. It was not that we wanted definitions. It's not that we wanted boundaries. It was just that there had to be some kind of a clarification of a common goal to be able to pull us together. And that never really happened.

Ultimately, the program broke up, as people say in Evergreen vernacular. Students felt a lot of tension and stress. Especially difficult was being aware that the faculty of the

program were quarreling among themselves. As one participant said, the experience was traumatic.

Some of us were equating ourselves with the children of divorced parents. We felt like we were children being dragged into the middle of a divorce. It was pretty traumatic. We were all very upset. It affected everyone's lives immensely. 'We all needed counseling,' somebody joked, and it was true. We all needed counseling at the end of this. There were so many games that went on [as the program fell apart]. The [strained] dynamics between the faculty and the students and between the faculty and each other were real subtle.

In order to deal with the shock and anger that came from experiencing the unravelling of this program for which they had had high expectations and to which they had felt very committed, students ended up needing to talk through what they had experienced.

I talked to everyone I knew about it. I got so sick of talking about it, but I couldn't seem to talk about anything else. Friends from the class would get together and talk about it. I would talk about it with my parents. I would talk about it with everybody. That's all I talked about for weeks. I got very sick of it. I was also seeing a counselor so I could talk to her about it. She was an Evergreen graduate, [so] she understood completely.

Despite the disappointment and trauma that students say they experienced, there was still a feeling that participating in the program had been a worthwhile experience.

It was an incredible learning experience. I learned a tremendous amount. This was the most exciting quarter I ever had. It was traumatic and bad things did happen, but I was also introduced to different kinds of [ideas and perspectives]. I found [that I had] a very strong interest in [the program topic], strong enough that I think I'm going to go to graduate school to continue to study it, which I wouldn't have done if I hadn't taken this class.

What could have made a program which broke up such "an incredible learning experience"? Even though this program did not accomplish what the faculty had intended it to, it did succeed in a sense for some students. It did this because it helped them to discover for themselves what it meant to be independent, self-motivated learners. In the case of one student, it accomplished this feat by giving her just the push she needed at the right time. While it could be argued that if the program had not hit rocky times it might have helped her more or in different ways, the conflict she experienced in here provided her just the impetus she needed to discover the value in being able to take her learning into her own hands. This same phenomenon is again reflected in the following story:

The knowledge that the faculty [in this program] had was so incredible. I wished that I had been able to take [better] advantage of it. It had such potential [even with regard to] just learning about how people interact. [The break up] just sort of played out in front of me.

[There were] a lot of books, but it was nice to be able to just read parts of them to get a feel [for the topic], and say, 'OK, I'm going to go back and I'm going to read this when I have time. I'm going to pursue this interest that's been sparked in [me here by] this subject.'

##

I'm glad that I went through it. It was a very valuable learning experience to be in this program and take charge and say, 'I want to make this work. I care about this [program] enough to do something about it.' To be able to say, 'I really want to make a difference. It didn't work out, but at least I tried.'

That was very valuable. That's what Evergreen is all about in a way, [being able to say], 'At least I tried.' Just seeing how the faculty related to the students, how the students related to one another and how it all came together was really valuable. Just to see the interactions between people, especially because we were studying what health is, and to see how the health of our class played out, and to see how that related to the health of society at large. And to see how what was going on among us was going on everywhere. It was so interconnected. I'm not sorry that it happened. I'm sorry that it was traumatic, but I'm not at all sorry that I did it.

The enthusiasm in these student reflections shows that something really important happened in that program, even though it did come to an early end. What happened is that students were given the freedom to learn. This plus the fact that they found a topic they cared about and the feeling that they really had to take things into their own hands if they were going to get what they wanted out of the program. This combination of factors led them to experience an unexpected transformation in the way they viewed teaching and learning, as well as in the way they viewed themselves as students.

In addition to many accounts of positive, transformational learning at Evergreen, some students reported having program experiences which had impacted them in a more negative way. Instead of feeling as if their programs had freed them or opened them up to new ideas, insights and ways of seeing things, these individuals felt their programs had constricted their learning process by metaphorically putting blinders on them. They felt the school had thwarted their efforts to learn. One student I interviewed was particularly angry in this respect, and articulated his disappointment at having had such an experience. "After one program, I wrote in my evaluation I felt like I was getting out of prison. A combination of things made me feel that way."

One factor that contributed to his feeling he had been imprisoned in this program was a particular faculty member's way of teaching and interacting with participants. From my interviewee's perspective, his demeanor is felt to have impeded the kind of serendipitous learning process that students expect to discover at Evergreen.

The faculty person was a problem. He was very much into the power of opposition. He was brilliant, and there are things I learned from him, but it was [primarily] surviving [his way of teaching]. He is incredibly brutal. He tears people apart. He publicly humiliates peo-

ple. [For example], there was a writers' group [in this particular program]. A student came in late, and [this faculty member] simply ordered him out of the room rather forcefully.

Another example is that in order to get into the program it was necessary to produce an expression that you had done. I did a piece of writing. He read it, and his first comment was, 'Well, was English your first language?' Now, apart from that being blatantly racist, I think that it was extremely disrespectful of my work. You would get a conference with him and he would basically say, 'Your work is shit!'

Although the faculty member's interactional style is perceived to have been a significant part of the problem which impeded the kind of inspirational learning process students were seeking, it is not viewed as the only factor. Other characteristics also contributed to the less-than-inspiring program ambience. As this interviewee characterized the malaise he saw in the program,

Programs are made not simply by members of the faculty, but also by the students. The program was supposed to be collaborative and work in small groups. The group I happened to get in simply didn't function very well. We lost one of the three members part way through the quarter. She hadn't been contributing much to the group, not that any of us had been.

Throughout both this chapter and in chapters to come, this downside image of teaching and learning at Evergreen will recur. While it is not reflective of the majority opinion, according to my research, it does represent a significant dissenting organizational voice. In many respects, this alternative voice is very much in keeping with the institution's traditions and values. It is, for instance, reflective of both the founding inspiration and culture-creation process of the college itself. As such, it is deeply embedded. While some may have a tendency to be critical of this shadow voice, I believe it is more constructive to try to understand it. Because I view it as being more helpful to the Assessment Study Group and other insiders, this is the tack I intend to take throughout the report.

C. STUDENTS' SEMINAR PARTICIPATION EXPERIENCES

Participating in seminars yields a special kind of educational experience. For most students, it is very different from anything they have ever before experienced in an educational institution. Some students I interviewed lauded it in their stories and reflections, others complained about it, but everyone put it in a discrete semantic category. Those for whom the seminar process had worked well talked about it in a very positive way. For instance, they often cited the opportunity to create genuine, meaningful relationships with faculty and other students as a factor that had contributed to their positive experience here. A strong sense of community, helped them to feel supported and accepted. It also tended to enhance their positive self-image. This, in conjunction with the freedom and flexibility they found, led to another feeling, that of permission to discover and pursue an area of learning which was meaningful to them and about which they felt passionate.

Students who viewed their seminar participation experience as disappointing tended to talk about this arena of teaching and learning in somewhat more critical terms. Their accounts of what transpired in their seminars and how they were affected by it communicated a downside image of the process. In this point of view, perceived negative factors were highlighted. By and large, these were often the same characteristics that were touted in the more optimistic perspective. Here, however, they were interpreted quite differently. Instead of a strong sense of community, students reported feeling alienated. Rather than talking about an exhilarating sense of freedom due to their seminar's inherent flexibility, participants complained about feeling thwarted, blocked or cut off. Rather than being liberated and inspired, they felt censored and constrained.

These two images, as well as a variety of animating characteristics and themes, are apparent in the following student stories and reflections on seminar. Basically, they reveal participants' views of what makes Evergreen seminars distinctive.

Size:

Coming from a state university on the East Coast, a lot of times I was mostly in lectures with 200 or more people. I was in a lecture once with 720 people in it.

Active and cooperative interaction:

When we've talked about education in [my program], we've talked about the difference between the 'banking system' of education where the professor just gives you information and you put it in your memory bank, versus a more 'cooperative' educational approach where the teachers and students interact a lot more. [At Evergreen], the students actually act as teachers to a certain degree and the teachers actually act as students to a certain degree. Where education at Evergreen really branches out [from the 'banking' model in more conventional institutions] is in the seminar.

Faculty assume a facilitative role:

The role of the teacher is completely different [in seminars at Evergreen] and I think that that's good. Ideally, if the education process is working properly, the students would come to the teacher for information. Other than that the teacher should not involve [him or herself].

##

[My seminar leader] can sense when things are choking up and can then lend some insight. Every now and then, she'll contribute some insight [in this way]. [For instance], she'll digress [from the issue at hand] and give us some background information which is usually helpful. That's [an example of] the whole 'community idea.' She has gotten to know us, and there's sort of a 'feel' that goes with it.

##

When we get together [in seminar], our teacher takes a real removed role. [During a meeting], we talk about things that we've read and ideas. At the beginning of seminar, the teacher just goes up to the chalk board and asks, 'What do people want to talk about today?' and writes down a few ideas. Then we sit down and talk. People sit around a circle of tables and the professor usually sits on the same side [every day]. We loosely go from the board, you know, what's been written down, or just go wherever the conversation takes us. The professor does sort of take a role of maintaining some direction. Other than that, it's real sort of free.

Seminars facilitate a sense of community:

We've developed a little bit of a community [in seminar]. Different individuals have certain ways of expressing themselves and you sort of get to know that. When something comes up and someone raises his hand a lot of times you know what he's going to say. You know where he's going to come from or how he's going to say it.

It's gotten to be more than just a competitive sort of thing. There are some people who don't say a word and there are other people who [talk a lot]. We're all getting comfortable with each others' idiosyncrasies. Certain people will be very outspoken when things get abstract; some people take more of a pragmatic view. Things along that line.

What makes for satisfying and dissatisfying seminar experiences:

A good seminar is one where people bring up underlying issues about what the writer [of a book we've read] is trying to communicate. Bad seminars deal with the mechanics of the story. I harken the example to photography when I put up prints in a show and I am at the opening. [On the one hand], someone may talk to me as an artist and then, [on the other hand], someone else comes up and asks me what kind of film or lens I used. Technical questions are fine, but I should not be seminarizing on whether the author used proper sentence structure in a paragraph. We should be examining the intent of the writer. [The same is true of] seminars on films. What was the intent? I do not care to talk about how badly its lighting was. Was that [aspect] intentional? Was the filmmaker making a statement by using a particular kind of lighting? I do not want to B.S. through technical stuff. What I have found when we do that in seminars is that people either do not see underlying issues, or they are uncomfortable dealing with them.

##

We had good seminars and bad seminars. Mostly it had to do with what the material was that we covered, whether the book was controversial or whether it was just 'nice.' You know, what can you say about a nice book? 'Boy, was it a nice book.' That's about all you can say about it. You know, you don't have much to say.

Spontaneous seminars:

Some students I interviewed were not particularly impressed by the quality of their official program seminars. These were marked by too much tension and disagreement for my interviewees to feel comfortable enough to express their own views. As a result, they felt deprived of the richly rewarding experience they had been anticipating. So, they took matters into their own hands. By accident, they and their friends discovered it was possible to hold their own satisfying informal seminars in their dorm rooms.

I think that a lot of times the best seminars we had were not organized program seminars. They were just sitting at home and talking about different things. Because everyone [who was] in my room was taking a different program, we were all talking from different perspectives. I was talking from the perspective of a student in [a coordinated studies program called] 'Matter and Exploration.' Another person was talking [from] a student perspective in 'Evolution.' [Another from that of] structures in 'Chaos' and other areas. So it was interesting to hear [what they had to say].

[We did this] all the time. I mean, even though it wasn't an official classroom seminar, an issue would come up and you'd have opinions from different areas, from a person who has mostly a science person to a person who's in expressive arts to a photographer's point of view. [We talked about all kinds of things], anything, any kind of current event. Even something that's going on with the school, like [the scandal-ridden departure of the former president] Joe Olander. [We talked about] the whole deal with him. So anything that would come up you could talk about with these different people.

I think that the [sometimes tense seminar] atmosphere Evergreen produces [is not always conducive to learning]. Even though the seminars weren't that great in class, we carried them home and had them in a much more personal setting. We learned a lot that way, too.

Other students had similar experiences. They, too, found that seminars would start spontaneously outside of a formal classroom setting, though they did not claim to prefer these to their regularly scheduled program meetings. The following story, for instance, is from a freshman who discovered that Evergreen's dorms were sometimes fertile ground for such spontaneous seminar-ing:

One thing that I've thought was pretty great about the living situation here is that we've ended up having informal seminars rather often. For example, one of my roommates and I are in the same program. We'll just end up talking about whatever it is we're studying right there at the kitchen table, so teaching and learning does extend outside of the classroom.

Even at the beginning of the year when none of us had actually started our programs, we ended up talking about a variety of subjects with people we'd run into in the dorm. Basically what I'm trying to say is that people here tend to have interests besides what's in their little textbook. [They don't just] close their books [in class] and then

go home. People's minds stay open and active outside of the classroom here. So we end up having informal seminars whenever the mood strikes. I think that's pretty unique.

One student, who transferred to Evergreen this year as a junior, has a significantly different perspective on informal, out-of-class discussions. In general, his observations are that students here are reluctant to engage in serious intellectual conversation outside of class.

There are the classic conversation stoppers [outside class like], 'Oh, this is beginning to sound just like class' or, 'Aren't we out of class?' It's not fashionable to sound too academic outside of class. [I guess] you're supposed to be thinking about the next party or something like that.

In his view, however, his own living experience is significantly different.

I don't agree with [the above] perspective. I live in [the dorms called] The Mods, and I've been pretty fortunate to have moved in with three interesting guys. We have a lot of chats. We compare what we're all studying. We have discussions about various aspects of philosophy and other things like that. This [living situation] is pretty interesting, but I don't think it's the norm by any means.

Seminaring as a student of color:

Some of my interviewees had the experience of being the only student of color in a seminar. One student in this situation was especially upset by this experience. For her, it was a difficult and extremely frustrating position to be put in. What made it this way was the fact that a number of her seminar co-participants could not relate to her experiences and perspectives.

When I was in [my Core program seminar], I was the only person of color. Nobody understood what I was talking about because they didn't know where I was coming from a lot of times. Even if I threw out my perspective, which I did, people didn't have the background. It was as if people were responding, 'What you're saying has no validity to it because I can't see it. It doesn't make sense because I've never experienced that.'

In contrast to her freshman Core program seminar, this year she is in a seminar in an upper-division program. The difference to her is striking. Whereas the Core program students were insensitive and inept at seminaring, this year she feels her classmates are both more skilled and more sensitive.

The seminar process has been great [this year]. I think that the reason it's so different from last year is that for one thing the students are a lot more mature and they've experienced the seminar process already. The reason why it was so hard last year was because a lot of people did not know how to approach sensitive topics. They did not know how to ask questions. They just said something really blatant. You can imagine some of the questions. I couldn't believe it. 'How can you ask that?' 'I know

maybe you're sincere, but don't you think maybe you could have gone about it in a different manner instead of saying it that way?' I think that's why it's a lot more comfortable this year. Also, I already have that background experience of how to go about it in seminar when certain [tense] situations arise.

Although her own situation has improved in her second year here, she thinks that a widespread genuine understanding of people of color at Evergreen is still missing. Commenting on the experience of other students of color whom she knows, she noted that,

A lot of people [of color] complain about [feeling as if they need to] leave here because of the insensitivity, because of the lack of understanding between cultural and ethnic groups. It's an important issue to consider because it is a problem here. I think [it's present in] the education too, because there's a lack of faculty members who are people of color here.

There's another problem with the education as well. Being in a seminar forces people to interact, but usually the interaction comes from a Western perspective, a European perspective. That seems like it's very unfair because it limits everyone, not just people of color, but Caucasians as well. I know they're trying to diversify, get more books by people of color and women, people who are [contemporary and relevant, that is], still alive and breathing. They're making efforts.

Based on their own experiences at Evergreen, as well as those of their friends, my interviewees who were students of color also suggested several ways in which the general situation for them on campus could be improved. "If there are more people of color in a seminar group, then maybe they can back each other up." "I think there just need to be more people of color [on campus] and more interaction [between people of different ethnic groups]." "I think that getting more diversity here is one step. [But] retaining them here is another thing. Getting them here and keeping them here has been a problem."

A number of white students also expressed an interest in wanting to make the campus more multicultural. For example, one student who is interested in addressing this problem shared his perceptions of how Western educational structures, including the ones at Evergreen, may not adequately serve culturally diverse students.

'Seminaring is a Western structure and may not apply in other cultures.' I have two views on that. One is that we need to respect other cultures and their way of dealing with things. We need to accommodate people of all cultures because they are going to slowly change the face of the larger picture.

[My second view is this]: when students of other cultures attend Evergreen, we aren't [just] teaching them to go back and exist in their own culture. We are teaching them the multicultural approach, too. This should include how to exist in the Western world, not that they have to conform to our standards. We should recognize what they have to offer and what their cultural upbringing is. They should recognize that they are not necessarily bound to follow their traditions. That may give them power, too.

From his point of view, a way to accomplish this change would begin with training faculty in how to deal with a culturally diverse student clientele.

I think instructors ought to have training in [how to conduct] seminars. They ought to have facilitator training. They ought to be able to recognize a conflict. They ought to be able to know how to foster a discussion properly without alienating people. At the same time they ought to be able to be 'vibes monitor' for the group. If people are not participating in a discussion, [the seminar leader should be able to] find out if expressing an opinion on a written document is contrary to someone's culture.

D. STUDENTS' CONTRACT PARTICIPATION EXPERIENCES

In the course of my research, I discovered that students participate in individual or group contracts for one overriding reason: a strong desire to pursue a topic which they have found to be inspiring. Most likely, they discovered this special interest through a coordinated studies program. Having discovered that they are fired up about it, however, they may then be confronted by a problem. There may be no subsequent program offering through which they can continue to develop this interest. As a result, they are put in the position of having to decide how strong their interest is in this topic. If it is very strong, they may decide to create an individual or group contract which will meet their interest.

Several student accounts of contract-related experiences follow. The first story comes from a student who had come to Evergreen expecting to be a literature "major," but then discovered a passion for botany field studies in her Core program. She continued to pursue this interest until she ran out of programs that would facilitate her desire for greater depth in this area.

After I decided that I really wanted to capitalize on my botany skills, I became pretty frustrated with the limitations that Evergreen had. [These revolved around the fact] that as an undergraduate I couldn't get more in-depth. [The nature of the limitations was that] nothing else was offered other than what I had taken. The botany that I did take was incorporated in other programs.

From her perspective, the problem she experienced stems from a fundamental characteristic of Evergreen culture, the interdisciplinary coordinated studies approach. As a result, she believes that, "Evergreen is great for offering pretty general things and an interdisciplinary approach. But if you want to get deeper, you have to pretty much know what you want to do exactly and [then] try to get an individual contract going."

Because she was familiar with what was involved with signing up for and taking a pre-packaged program offering, she saw this characteristic of the college's culture as a limitation.

One limitation [of Evergreen] is not being able to pick the specific things that you want or even [being able to say], 'I'd like to take a history class this quarter.' You have to take a lot of [additional] 'gunk' to get at the history that you might want to take, gunk

meaning [the non-history parts of] the program. So that's a limitation of Evergreen. That's the one limitation that stands out that I've actually run into.

In other words, once a student believes he/she has identified his/her passion, the same coordinated studies format that served to excite him/her to begin with may eventually be perceived as a barrier which restricts continued pursuit of this same interest.

On the other hand, some students hold a different view of individual and student-initiated group contracts. Instead of viewing them as a "last resort" way of trying to get around an inherent limitation of the coordinated studies approach, this perspective sees contracts as an opportunity to do highly individualized work which has a significant amount of personal meaning for the participants. An example of this point of view comes from another student.

I conceive of individual contracts as being like what two of my friends are doing this quarter. They started out in [a program] but decided they didn't want to study the material the way [the program] was doing it. So they created a contract where they're going at their own pace even though they are doing similar amounts and similar types of work.

So individual contracts are a way of [doing what you want to do in the way you want to do it] when you're really self-motivated. Sometimes it's hard to be in a program that isn't taking you exactly where you [sense you] need to go. Coordinated studies can be like that [because] you can't please everyone all the time within a program. Faculty can only hope to touch on subjects that interest everybody some of the time.

An example of the latter perspective comes from a third-year student who is now a senior. As she tells it, the sense of freedom to do pretty much what she wanted to do was very exciting. This freedom to direct her own studies, in conjunction with the trust she felt her advisor placed in her to use it wisely, evoked a high level of commitment from her. "I worked harder on my individual contract than I did in a program. I gave myself more work and higher expectations for what needed to happen than [there had been] in the programs [I'd had up to that point]."

Emily [pseudonym], a student whom I came to know quite well over the course of the year, also had a very positive contract experience. She is an older student who decided to return to college after a hiatus of about 15 years. Emily was attracted to Evergreen because of its flexibility and the opportunity to have a lot of say over what she would study and how she would study it. She began her first quarter here (Fall 1990) in an upper-division program that was highly interdisciplinary even by Evergreen standards. Although the program sounded exciting to her on paper, and the faculty tried to make it stimulating in reality, there was a pervasive feeling among many of the participants (including the faculty) that it never quite cohered. Because of this, she began looking for another program into which she could transfer come winter quarter. She found one, but it turned out to be full with a long waiting list. One of the faculty members teaching this program, however, suggested that Emily contact another student because she, too, was talking about organizing a group contract that would deal with similar topics and issues.

As Emily tells the founding story of this student-originated study, it begins with the two students who hit on the idea to do the contract:

There were two people who were in a program. The one absolutely hated it; the other one pretty much hated it, but she was kind of hanging in. But one knew about [a different faculty], and told the other one about that, so she went to [this faculty person], and of course [her] class was full in September and closed during the winter. But, [the faculty member] was like, 'Well, why don't you start your own?' [She] said, 'Well, my class is full, but you can do your own.' And, somehow someone else ended up coming to [one of the two students] and said, 'You should call so and so.' And so that's how it got started.

[A bit later], I guess they put up a sign during the Academic Fair, but I didn't even see the sign. I ended up getting referred to them. I got together [with them] because I was referred by this other faculty who was in a totally different area. [This faculty person] said, 'Oh, you should go talk to [the first faculty member].' And I'm going, 'OK, I'll check it out.' And I really didn't think anything was going to become of it.

Anyway, she and I got together. [From talking with her], it became real clear to me that if I wasn't happy in [the program I had been in], it would be up to me to do something about it.

I talked to some other students in my program, and they weren't happy, either. It wasn't so much that they weren't happy with the program [itself], but they wanted to be doing something else and they didn't know what. It was like, 'If I stay here, I'm just going to be a slug.' The worst thing to be after deciding after all this time to come back to school would be to just be marking time somewhere. Beyond that, I know myself well enough to know that I would just get bored, and I didn't want to do that. So, it was more like, 'Well, I know I have to do something [that] I'm really interested in or I'm going to quit.' And I didn't want to quit.

So, ultimately we got together and we did this [contract]. The students who had talked to [the faculty] had this real literature focus, women's literature. I actually was real interested in women and leadership. People were also talking about different styles of learning, including experiential learning. That was important to me.

We had meetings, we discussed [our ideas], and [a shared idea for a group contract] became really strong. I think that's why I decided to go with it. It seemed like people were really willing to put a lot of time into it. I knew, if we were talking about group process, if we were going to make a program that everyone equally shared in, I knew it was going to take a lot of time. If I had gotten any sense that people were not serious, like, 'Hey, 1-3 p.m. Wednesday afternoons, that's it', I would have said, 'Forget it.' I knew it would not have worked. Or it wouldn't have worked in the way I wanted to experience it, which was with everybody really having a voice. What that would mean is not everybody's going to agree; not everybody's going to know what they think even. So they're going to have to figure that out as they're going along. So there's going to be a lot of stumbling around and futzing around.

[One of the faculty members we talked to about how to do this contract] threw the responsibility [for organizing it] on us in the beginning. She said, 'OK, how do you want to set up your program?' We were kind of waiting for her to tell us what to do, and she was like, 'Humph. [You need to do it for yourselves].'

So we started to figure out books [to read] and rooms [to meet in] and stuff like that. It was like [we shared] this assumption that, 'Of course we have to do this stuff to get it done.' I really didn't have a sense from anyone that, 'Oh, she's sloughing off. She's just hanging back and waiting for somebody else to do it.'

We really took ourselves seriously. I didn't realize until we did our assessment at the end of the quarter, how intrinsic [this was]. But it was such a part of the quarter that it became an assumption. 'Well, of course. We're all going to be totally committed to this.' The thoroughness was there, and that's what I wanted. I wanted to do something [that was] thorough. [I wanted to] lift up all the rocks and see what was under them. Everybody wanted to do that! Or, if they didn't, they had an agenda that fit into that [scheme]. So it somehow worked.

According to Emily, the members of the group contract kept up this same level of energy and commitment once the quarter began.

We set up a structure similar to [one suggested to us by one of the faculty members we talked to]. [We asked her stuff like], 'Well, how do we do this? There are all these books we want to read. How could we possibly get through them? You've done this before. What have you found that works?'

For one thing, this faculty member suggested that the group participants try to work together in teams of two.

She had this idea about having partners. [The idea was that] if there were two [people who were] partners, then together they would read two books a week. The one partner would read one and the [other] one would read the other [book]. Well, we couldn't do it. People felt they both had to read both books every week.

The group contract that was created out of this intense planning process was equally ambitious. It, too, reflects a number of patterns that I found elsewhere in Evergreen's academic culture. For one thing, it had an inspirational socially aware title of a sort commonly found in other programs and contracts, "Womyn, Herstory and Power." As with other aspects of this contract, the title was discussed and negotiated between the co-participants. The contract outline, covenant and syllabus that members created were similarly ambitious and consensual. They, too, expressed a great deal of commitment to the subject matter as well as a concern for meeting individual members' needs. Several tenets in the covenant give a sense of the culture that these individuals created.

- Attendance and being on time are important and need to be taken seriously.
- We won't interrupt each other, with the exception of those who have expressed that they wouldn't mind letting someone else try to clarify their thoughts, keeping in mind

that we cannot assume what someone else is trying to say, but we can ask questions that lead to a better understanding.

- We will build time into our syllabus to reflect on our work, to have a sense of closure when we need to, to evaluate our processes as a group, to develop goals for ourselves, and generally to decide together as a group what is important to our learning process.

- Kindness to each other [is important, as is] empathy for another person's viewpoint, even if you have a problem with it. That's life.

- We will each facilitate at three seminars, one workshop, and be in charge of finding and presenting one film.

Although the syllabus does not list meeting times and locations, Emily indicated that members committed themselves to spend some 16 hours a week working together. Like other curricular offerings at the college, this time was divided between a combination of meeting formats: seminars, workshops, and something participants referred to as "creative response" sessions.

An important facet of the contract culture that did not show up in the syllabus was members' participation in another longstanding Evergreen tradition, the retreat. In this case, it occurred early in the quarter. As with many such events, it was held in an inviting, "homey" place in a natural, wooded setting. This helped people to feel receptive to learning about each other in an informal and non-intimidating way. According to Emily, the experience of sharing a retreat together helped members develop more of a sense of trust and community. It also seemed to instill feelings of personal empowerment among the members that continued throughout the quarter that the contract lasted.

During the final, evaluation phase of the contract, a number of Evergreen traditions again became apparent. For example, the acting out of a widespread cultural assumption occurred. This assumption may be characterized as, "Nothing should be taken for granted." In addition to this animating characteristic, a second was also displayed, that decisions should be made according to consensus. As Emily noted, "Doing these evaluations actually was a big thing. Our assumption was, 'We are going to discuss everything. Every period that we put on the paper, we are going to discuss and agree with it.' That's why it took us a week to do this final evaluation."

As was the case with many other aspects of planning and executing this group contract, the evaluation process was a learning experience that facilitated the development of stronger individual and collective voices among the members. One way in which it did this was through the required writing up of a "program description." As they had done when they invented other aspects of their contract culture, participants wrestled with how they would evaluate themselves as individuals and as a group. They began by asking themselves a central question, "How are we going to do this?" In responding to this question, members enacted a cultural scenario that is traditional at the college.

We didn't assume anything. It was like everything is going to be created from the ground up. [We did a lot of] 're-inventing the wheel' stuff. [We had to write up] our own program description because it didn't exist. We had to create it. We had to ask, 'What did we do and how did we do it?' This was also all done by consensus, so it took at least three meetings to come up with this thing that was almost a page long. But it was real good. We were all real happy with it. We really tried to make it [as reflective of what] everyone wanted as it could be.

While we agreed on the body of the document, there were some concerns about some of the words. [The way this played out was like one person would say], 'Well, I want that word.' [And somebody else would say], 'No, I don't want that word in my evaluation.' [Then the first person would come back with], 'OK, you can write your evaluation so it has your own words in it.'

From what Emily told me about her contract experience, I was impressed. Based on what she described, members were excited and energetic throughout the quarter. In fact, her story made it sound as if the participants had had a very special experience, one in which they underwent a meaningful and empowering transformation of sorts. Because of this, I asked her what she thought made the contract work so well.

The first thing that comes to mind is willingness and commitment. [For instance], at the beginning one person knew she was going to have to be gone for two weeks. She was like, 'I'll totally catch up. I'll read the books when I'm gone. I'll write responses. I'll talk to somebody when I get back to kind of catch up.' You knew that she just was not going to go away for two weeks and say, 'Well, forget it. I wasn't there, I don't have to worry about it.'

We set it up in our covenant that if you're going to be late, or gone, or something, you don't have to make an excuse to the group. That trust was there. We trusted that you weren't out screwing-off somewhere. [And then] there was this [feeling of] responsibility, like if you have this much freedom, you owe the group, somehow. And that worked, people were responsible.

When I interviewed Emily about her contract experience, she and her group had just completed their week-long self-evaluation process. As a result, it was very much on her mind. In telling me about it, she described a scenario that is a deeply embedded aspect of Evergreen culture.

We spent the whole [last week] talking about what we did in the contract. For me, it is still a process of validating what we did. I don't know if that's quite the right word, but seeing it as legitimate. Through the whole quarter, I was going, 'Is this academic? Is this really real? Is this something you could get credit for? In what?' That kind of stuff.

The reason Emily questioned the experience that she and her contract cohorts had shared was because the Evergreen world of student-originated studies was different from any organized learning she had ever known.

It wasn't like any kind of school [I had ever experienced]. I realized [that] in my mind 'school' is still a white male [professor] up at a podium with 200 people in an audience. That's school [in my imagination]. And even though I know school [is not only that way], that's the picture that's still in my mind.

E. STUDENTS' EVALUATION PARTICIPATION EXPERIENCES

Because many of the accounts I received from students about their evaluation experiences are self-explanatory, I have elected to provide background or interpretation very selectively in this section. As is the case throughout this report, certain themes and patterns stand out. Probably the strongest theme in this section stems from students' perception that narrative evaluations put them more in control of their own learning. According to my interviewees, the process of writing evaluations for oneself and one's faculty forces reflection of what was done and what was learned over the course of a quarter. It is also viewed as an opportunity to further hone one's critical thinking and writing skills.

In addition to this overriding theme, there are a number of subthemes. Some of these highlight perceived positive aspects of the evaluation process. Others highlight complaints with this approach. Over the next couple of pages, I have included a sample of evaluation reflections that I collected from a number of students. The subthemes precede the stories from which they are inferred.

The first few subthemes that follow reflect a positive image of Evergreen's evaluation approach.

Evergreen's culture encourages participants to evaluate formally and informally:

Evaluation goes on at Evergreen all the time. Working among staff people in [an office on campus] I saw that [this process] didn't happen easily except for people who were sort of 'organically Evergreen people.'

##

[After attending Evergreen for three years], I've noticed that my tendency is to evaluate [my experience] at different intervals, even [when I'm involved] in non-Evergreen activities.

Narrative evaluations are perceived to make learning a more satisfying and meaningful experience:

I like the idea of no grades because I feel it takes a lot of academic pressure away from you. I mean, I still strive as much as I did before, but now I'm striving for myself. I

strive now because I want to and not because I have to get a better grade than the person sitting to my left or something.

##

The lack of grades is a big part of the reason I came here. I think it creates a more even relationship with the faculty. [This way], there's a little less arbitrary power resting in their position as professors. You have a little more control over what's said about your work. Definitely one of the worst things is to write something that you feel is a good expression, and just get a few arbitrary comments made as justification for what you think is an unfair grade. It's a very upsetting feeling. Here I think there's definitely a premium put on valid criticisms. The narrative evaluation demands good writing and good thinking by the writers.

##

I think it is a very, very important part of any sort of learning, whether it is formal academic learning or just learning about how to do things better or learning about a certain situation, to be somewhat reflective and to pull yourself 'out' of your own situation.

Narrative evaluations give students a detailed picture of their learning experience:

A 'rockin' and rollin'' evaluation is just like having a letter of recommendation. Usually your faculty is someone who really gets to know you by the end of the quarter. Your faculty is somebody who has really seen your work and evaluated it and also has enough background of their own to know if you're doing well in that subject or not. If you have a mediocre evaluation, then there is always room for you to improve later on, to show an improvement through evaluations. [A narrative evaluation] tells so much more about a person than grades do, obviously. It also means that you can't just look through it in five minutes and judge it from there.

The next few evaluation experience accounts highlight problems that students sometimes encounter with the Evergreen evaluation process.

Narrative evaluations can be inadequate and, as a result, disappointing:

[Unfortunately, in my experience with evaluation here], a lot of times the teacher will just say, 'Well, he did pretty good.' That 'pretty good' thing makes me mad. You know, what is 'pretty good'? Can you define that? One time I said to one of my teachers here that I really wanted to have more comments than [what he'd given me]. For example, my final third-quarter evaluation [from this one faculty in my Core program] was about three inches long on the paper, whereas the other two professors [in

other quarters] had written a page and a half. It just seemed like, 'Why did you even write anything?' I didn't feel that the teacher even knew me.

The evaluation process can seem unclear:

When it comes to the evaluation process, students are pretty much on their own [to figure out how to go about it]. There is no official format really.

Translating narrative evaluations into grades is difficult:

At the end [of your evaluation], you're required to give course equivalencies. Sometimes it's really difficult to figure that out [because] it's hard to compartmentalize your learning. So you get really wild stuff like 'Buddhist Home Economics.'

The foregoing sampling of student comments and stories is intended to serve as a collective backdrop to the more in-depth but individualized reflections that follow. These are gleaned from interviews I conducted with two longtime students. To begin with, one interviewee talked about the way she has come to think about the narrative evaluation process. "The whole idea is to figure out what you have learned and where it is you want to go in the future. If you don't know what it is you learned, then guess. Guess and see what parts of your learning are important to you."

For her, this is not a process that she performs only once on a given evaluation. "I will go back and look at my old evaluations and see that sometimes I've made the right guesses and sometimes I haven't. Sometimes I was too categorical about things. Sometimes I didn't explore issues enough."

##

The only problem with doing narrative evaluations is that there is not enough space. But that's understandable because people aren't going to want to sift through tons and tons of pages. Brevity is probably important in getting your thoughts focused. There is never enough time to do a good evaluation either.

A graduating senior gave me a detailed description of her evaluation writing process. She began by telling me about her perspective on the self-evaluation process.

[A self-evaluation] should show different types of learning, like what you've learned as far as the subject matter goes and also what you've learned about your own learning process. This has been part of my end-of-quarter-ritual. I focus on how what I've learned influences how I've learned, because what I study is how people learn and think. That somehow gives me a perspective on how I learn and think. And so in that way evaluations can be real grounding. You kind of feel like there is some closure [to what you've done in a quarter].

In addition to her philosophy of Evergreen-style evaluations, she gave me an account of the actual evaluation process she has found useful. I find her story interesting for a couple of reasons. First, writing a self-evaluation is a difficult process. Her description of how she creates her own self-evaluations reveals that she has put a great deal of thought into what the process means to her. It strikes me that few students attending a conventional institution of higher education would be inspired to put anywhere near this much thought and effort into learning about their learning from the grades they receive. Second, her degree of self-reflection is a pattern I have seen expressed in different ways among many other Evergreen students as well.

They say that everybody has a different process [they go through in writing up their evaluation]. I start at the beginning of the quarter by creating goals for myself. Especially when I'm starting a new program, I ask myself, 'What is it I want to learn this year? What do I think the program's going to be like? What am I going to learn?' I try to figure that part out, and then by the middle of the quarter, I start evaluating. [At that point, I ask], 'How am I going to evaluate this quarter? What am I learning?' By about the middle of week nine, I'm already writing. What I do is write down all the books that I've read, including ones that are not in the program. I usually end up reading extra books that relate just because I get interested in the ideas. And then I write down all of the films that we saw and then any topics in seminar that were interesting. I sort of outline my notes.

[One time, for example], I went through all of my books and all of my evaluations and I looked at all of my papers and I picked out the most important ones and sort of looked at the themes in there. Then I try to find the most important things. I don't write about everything. I'm a visual learner, so I put everything on one page. Then it's like, 'Okay, this [theme] connects to this book, really connects to this lecture that I enjoyed, or to this theme in this program. I see how this [all] connects now.' Hopefully, I'm putting things 'together' throughout the whole quarter, because I think evaluations are a place to show connections. [They are] a place to show that you have been active in working with your material.

Then what I do is I take all of that (goals of the beginning, goals of the middle, and goals of the end) and I write a little story. Most of my evaluations start out with a quote or an idea at the beginning that sort of pulls the reader into where I'm at. This brings structure to it. At the end of my evaluation, I always include something about where it is I'd like to go [next with what I've learned that quarter]. Usually, it is a broad goal. It is really interesting to watch my goals change from year to year to year.

Along with explaining how she goes about writing her self-evaluation, this student also gave me her view of faculty/student evaluation conferences.

Finally, in my evaluation conference, I look for confirmation of the fact that, yes, my seminar participation is balanced; yes, I am really prepared, I'm not fooling myself; yes, I've really worked with the material in an intellectual style that is up to par for my own expectations, etc. I usually like evaluation conferences because the faculty person tells me how wonderful I am. I don't want to sound conceited or anything, but it is just nice to hear good things about yourself.

It is certainly striking how thoughtful and committed this student is to the narrative evaluation process. Clearly, she is not just "going through the motions" as she participates in this process. Instead, it is a ritual act that to her is filled with significance. Why is this the case? I believe there are two answers. Incidentally, both of these apply to other students I have interviewed as well. First, the writing of her self-evaluation is a way for her to get in touch not only with what she learned, but how she learned it. This gives her a better understanding of her own learning process. A clearer view of this, in turn, helps her get a better grip on her sense of direction. Learning to take one's "pulse" in this way is strategic in Evergreen's flexible, ambiguous, ever-changing teaching and learning environment.

A second reason for her scrupulous commitment to the narrative evaluation process is evident in a comment she made. Just as she perceives it to be an important personal symbol, she also views narrative evaluations as having public significance. "Somebody once told me that the evaluation should be the best example of your work all quarter. It should be your best writing work at that point in time. That's why I put a lot of store into making it a cohesive piece of work."

Other students also found the narrative evaluation process to be meaningful. My interviewees, in fact, often volunteered that they felt them to have considerably more value than letter grades.

I think it's so much more complete and in depth. Each ability is talked about separately instead of averaging out through a grade. You get commended for your strengths and are aware of your weaknesses. It helps you know where to start your next quarter.

Just how much store students place in Evergreen's evaluation system can be seen in some of their negative comments. Rather than criticizing the approach, these comments frequently reflect the regret experienced by participants who felt they missed out because the process was mishandled by their faculty. One way in which this can occur was mentioned by several students. One version of this disappointing experience follows:

It's frustrating to get a mediocre evaluation [from a faculty member] just because that person doesn't laud their students' work. Doing the same amount of work for two faculty over two quarters, [you can end up] having one faculty just glow with praise while the other says, 'She could have done better.'

A second problem was also perceived to exist in relation to the evaluation process. As was the case with the above complaint, this one also reflects a concern that faculty might misjudge the quality and quantity of a student's participation.

'Loudmouths' in seminar tend to stand out in faculty members' minds. [Because of this], students who don't talk much in seminar are [primarily] evaluated on their written work. There are three areas where you are evaluated, seminar participation, written work, and outside projects [such as] workshops and things like that. [So], it can be frustrating for students who are shy to be judged on their seminar participation. The faculty sometimes assume that they don't have anything to say and/or are not thinking about what is going on in class.

The amount of significance that students attribute to the narrative evaluation process is also revealed in how difficult many of them find it to be. "Writing evaluations and having evaluation conferences with my faculty are the hardest things I do [at Evergreen], but they are the most important as far as my perception of what a good education is about."

Finally, some students reported experiencing another problem in conjunction with the evaluation process at Evergreen: trying to figure out whether or not they are doing well. This problem may be exacerbated by a combination of the college's emphasis on self-evaluation and self-motivation.

The only way I can figure out whether I'm doing a good job [in my programs] is by comparing myself to other students. [This is because I need] some basis for comparison. If I'm just [looking at my own performance], I don't have anything else to compare it against. Because I wanted to do a good job, I would look at a person and say, 'Boy, they're really good at seminar-ing. I wish I could be like that.'

This sort of intrinsic motivational competition [can be] worse than grades. I mean, the way that I react to graded tests, [for example], is that I just don't want to play the game so I study as much as I think is important and whatever grade I get is what I get. But this [kind of comparison] is much more mind-bending because I want to do the best job I can. I mean, part of being a self-motivated learner is saying, 'How far can I go? What more can I do?'

One outcome for students who feel this problem acutely is a pervasive feeling that, despite their best efforts, they have never done enough. I heard this comment many times from students with respect to a variety of kinds of work with which they were engaged.

F. STUDENTS' STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION THAT STEM FROM THEIR PARTICIPATION AT EVERGREEN

In the preceding five sections of this chapter, I have presented a representative sampling of the student participation experience stories I found. For the most part, these accounts have been descriptive. Each has highlighted the perceived impact that a particular practice in a specific campus setting is perceived to have had on an individual student. Because of their in context focus, these tales have provided us with descriptive "snapshots" of everyday life at Evergreen as seen by my key interviewees.

Missing from these stories, however, has been any mention of the perceived effects that long-term immersion in Evergreen's culture can have on students. To remedy this, I will now present a sample of narratives that reveal a different level of self-reflection. Instead of focusing on students' perceptions of what it was like to live through particular events, these accounts highlight what they believe to be continuities and consistencies over time and space in their participation experience at Evergreen. As such, these tales reveal an ongoing, informal process of "taking stock" that may be useful for assessment efforts.

What can be learned from examining these latest accounts? After having participated in Evergreen's teaching and learning culture for an extended period of time, students may begin to sense that a meaningful change is taking place within themselves. What is the nature of this change, and how do students believe it came about? These are the questions that will be pursued in this section.

First, I will address students' perception of the nature of this major change. They appear to perceive it as stemming from an accumulation of smaller changes that have affected the way they think about learning as well as their personal identity. In this regard, students often commented on how their participation here had better enabled them to view and reflect on, as well as gain more of a sense of control over, aspects of their lives that really mattered to them.

How students believe this change came to pass is equally important. For the most part, they credited Evergreen's teaching and learning culture with having facilitated this accomplishment in a number of ways. To begin with, it made learning seem exciting, even seductive, for the first time. Participants often spoke of becoming self-motivated with regard to the learning they were engaged in. Instead of studying because of the onus of a low grade, students frequently found themselves caught up in the excitement of pursuing a topic that really interested them. In addition, they also discovered themselves becoming more attuned to their own individual learning styles.

A second positive outcome that students attributed to Evergreen's culture in their "taking stock" stories is that it provided them with a valuable model for teaching and learning. They learned this model from participating in supportive practices and ways of doing things in such settings as Core programs, seminars, individual and group contracts, and narrative evaluations. Once they understood this approach, they then applied it to other areas of concern. One such area was self-discovery. According to the majority of my interviewees, adapting this approach to their own ends enabled them to experience a sometimes exhilarating sense of moving beyond where they had been when they first came to the school. Also important is the fact that most of these individuals expressed satisfaction with the direction in which their pursuits had taken them.

Both the nature of the change students say they have experienced over the course of their participation here, as well as how this change is perceived to have happened, can best be understood through an examination of their stories. The story of one senior, Kris [pseudonym], is a case in point. Her narration reveals that she believes she has experienced a change of this type. This perception is reflected in the central theme of her account, that she has changed in ways that are indeed meaningful to her through her participation in the college's teaching and learning culture. It is apparent in the following excerpt of her personal tale: "[Evergreen] felt like a really nice place to grow up. I feel that I've really grown up here. When I came as a freshman, I was very quiet and hardly spoke up in seminar. I was pretty frightened, actually."

As in most of the accounts that I found on this topic, the perceived supportive qualities of Evergreen settings are credited with playing an important role in facilitating students' learning and self-discovery.

I guess just being exposed to the non-threatening environment of a seminar has given me a chance to grow up, speak out and be forced to develop ideas and ideals on my own. [It has also] added to my own knowledge and helped me add to other people's knowledge.

What makes the environment here seem unusually "non-threatening" to Kris? A major factor in her view is that Evergreen's approach helped her develop as a learner and, more generally, as a person. It did this, to her way of thinking, by giving her the freedom to pursue her interests and chart her own sense of direction. "Evergreen is a good place to gain confidence within yourself [through] being able to design your own education. [You don't have] to go through the regimented steps of picking out a major and then go through [different] levels of classes."

The actual path Kris ended up pursuing at Evergreen is also highly symbolic to her. The reason for this is that her Evergreen experience does not just reflect the academic learning she has done. Instead, it also exemplifies the process of self-discovery she embarked on. How interrelated these two aspects of learning can be for students is apparent in another one of her accounts.

[When I came to Evergreen] I was interested in literature. I was going to take the 'Great Books' program at first, but [then] I realized I really didn't want to be a literature major and end up having to teach or something. So I guess I just got interested in the natural sciences from being exposed to [them] in 'Ideas of Evolution,' my Core program. From then on I became really interested in doing field studies. That led me to [a program called] 'Habitats.' There I got to do some more fieldwork, and that was really great.

Reflecting on how the path she pursued turned out, Kris observed that, "I guess one of my goals has been to try to develop skills so I wouldn't have to be stuck in an office somewhere, so that I could have field study skills to take [myself] outside."

In trying to show how Evergreen has had a positive impact on her as a student, Kris compared how she saw herself when she entered the college with how she finds herself now. According to her, the principle difference was that, "I didn't even have a direction when I came in as a freshman. I didn't have an idea about what I wanted to take or where I wanted to go. But I do now."

Her discovery of a sense of direction, however, did not happen overnight. From her perspective, it just gradually become more and more apparent to her that something important was happening over the time span of several quarters. As she put it, "[My sense of direction] didn't come and say, 'Ba-bing; I have your life planned for you', or anything like that. It just sort of crept up on me."

What can be induced from Kris' story? Principally, that long-term participation in Evergreen's culture may facilitate a profound sense of transformation in some students. This is certainly the case with Kris. Not only did she discover a new world of knowledge which excited her, she became engaged by it and felt encouraged to pursue it in a highly participatory and personalized way. In addition to being gratifying, she believes this approach also

enabled her to become more aware of her personal interests and needs. For instance, she sees it as having helped her to realize that she did not want to teach or hold down an office job. Though central to her direction at school, Kris had felt unable to decide on these matters until she spent time here. In this way, participation in Evergreen's culture nudged her toward a better sense of who she was and what she wanted to do. To understand more about this phenomenon, as well as how widespread it may be, we need to examine another student's transformational account.

Amanda [pseudonym] is also a senior. Like Kris, she expresses the sense that she has experienced a meaningful transformation through her participation at Evergreen. As with Kris, Amanda came to Evergreen feeling uncertain about her sense of direction. This uncertainty extended to her future career choice as well as to matters of lifestyle. Looking back, Amanda realizes she felt handicapped by having done most of her growing up in counterculture communities in rural areas. She believed she lacked an adequate understanding of the urban work world, a place she thought she might like to end up. So, in order to become qualified for an attractive niche in this new milieu, she decided that she had to do two things that were closely interrelated. For one thing, she realized that she needed to make informed decisions about what direction her studies should take. To do this, however, she knew she had to get a sense of what the urban work world was like. As she recounts it, "I came from a small town. My parents were self-employed. I had no idea about what the work world was [all about]. So [figuring it out] has all been learning by trial and error."

To fill in her career gap, Amanda used Evergreen resources creatively. She began by exploring possible interests in coordinated studies programs when she first started school here. "When I first came, a lot of the information that I really benefitted from came from the readings that we were doing in my Core program and from the lectures."

Once she discovered a topic that really inspired her, however, she put a lot of energy into finding and negotiating other educational vehicles that would allow her to continue to develop her interests in this area. "Later on [in my career here] as a student, I needed a different type of learning for my professional development. So, internships have been the way to go. I've done at least three quarters of hands-on work in several professional settings."

Of the various educational vehicles she pursued at Evergreen, Amanda found internships to be especially useful in learning about the prospective world of work. These accorded her the freedom and flexibility she was seeking in order to pursue her own interests in her own way. They helped her realize her goal by enabling her to feel more grounded in the reality of the urban work world. From this sprang an increased sense of self-confidence on her part, as well as an important understanding that affected the way she designed the remainder of her on-campus studies. In her words, this understanding was that, "There is a difference between having a skill and having knowledge. When you are thinking about beginning a vocation, you really have to have a skill at doing research and working with people."

As might be expected, Amanda believes her internships made the critical difference in her bid to experience a successful transformation to the urban way of life she desired. She is also convinced of the flexibility and value of Evergreen's approach to teaching and learning.

They talk about combining theory with practice [at Evergreen]. Well that is exactly what [an internship] does. But it also familiarizes the student with the demands of the working world. So, while you're still in school, you realize what kinds of skills you're going to need when you graduate.

From the foregoing stories, we can see that there is a fundamental similarity in the profound changes that both Amanda and Kris say they have undergone here. In both cases, the transformation is perceived to have been propelled by two factors, introspection on the part of the participants as well as participation in supportive traditions and inviting environments at the college. This suggests that these individuals see a connection between taking stock at the beginning of their journeys through Evergreen, developing the confidence to trust their emerging interests, and the eventual experience of transformation that may occur. Several of Amanda's comments seem to support this inference. For example, she notes that, "A lot [about] making choices [at Evergreen] has to do with introspection. [This means] just sitting down and thinking about what you are going to do in the future."

The reason she views introspection as a critical factor is that,

There is so much responsibility on the student [at Evergreen]. It either forces you to mature very quickly, to think about what you are going to do with the rest of your life, or the opposite. [That is], don't think about it at all. [Instead], freak out and take classes on whims.

From her perspective, Evergreen can seem supportive if students assume the responsibility for taking charge of their own education. Conversely, she thinks that it can also seem less hospitable to individuals who need a more clearly defined structure. "Evergreen is set up to serve more mature, directed students. For a lot of students right out of high school, it's not structured enough. They just kind of get lost in how many choices and possibilities there are."

I find it striking that, like Kris and Amanda, most of the students I interviewed who were immersed in the school's approach for several quarters also recounted the same basic kind of transformational experience story. This finding suggests that such a transformational pattern may be a distinctive and widespread feature of Evergreen's culture. Additional evidence to support this thesis comes from observations I have made of students' participation in other programs as well as in non-program settings (see Chapter VII).

Using this information, as well as data I obtained from other interviews, I constructed the following transformational scenario. At the heart of this scenario is the fact that it combines academic learning with opportunities and support for self-discovery. This holistic approach seems to gradually encourage students to come to a number of personal realizations. Over a prolonged period of time, usually several quarters, participants begin to have a clearer understanding of what interests and excites them. Typically, this is predicated by several factors. The first stems from having to decide what program to take. By thinking this through, students often come to their next insight. They discover, for example, that they are excited by a topic, idea or approach introduced in that program. They then figure out ways to work on this subject more intensively with one or more faculty they have come to know through the program. This further enhances their interest and excitement. From this experi-

ence comes an even greater feeling of connectedness, not only with the mentoring faculty, but also with the subject matter itself. In turn, this further inspires students to continue to develop new skills and understandings in the chosen area of study.

The process does not stop here. The connections that are made with faculty and other students during this process also can lead to news about other programs, internships or jobs which sound exciting and for which these students are now qualified. Ultimately, students find themselves in supportive, stimulating networks with fellow students, faculty and possibly even people in the larger community. Because these folks have similar interests, they develop a coherent sense of community. Ways in which these co-participants express their feelings of community include their willingness to share information, collaborate with each other, and support one another's efforts to continue to grow in this area of shared interest.

By participating in this transformational scenario, students generally gain in a number of ways. They often develop such qualities as a sense of confidence, a willingness to participate actively in group situations, an ability to think critically, a propensity to question anything that does not make sense, as well as the feeling that learning should be engaging. In addition, they often develop the perspective that not only is it alright to have dreams, but that being receptive to one's fantasies can be a useful strategy for creating a meaningful identity. Ultimately, if things proceed relatively well for students during their participation phase, chances are good that they may gain a heightened sense of who they are, who they would like to be, what they want to do, and how they can make a difference that matters to them.

To borrow a metaphor from several Evergreen faculty and administrators, students who actively participate in this scenario often end up creating a satisfying "voice" for themselves. Since the students I interviewed did not actually suggest this concept, I will only outline it here. (It is a complex idea and will be developed at the beginning of the next chapter). For now, I will say that it principally consists of becoming a focused, confident learner. Students who achieve this are characterized by their enthusiastic and comparatively self-motivated pursuit of their interests within the flexible framework provided by the school's teaching and learning culture.

Other students' transformational experience stories can furnish us with other pieces of this ethnographic puzzle. An important piece of information in this respect is that certain non-program settings on campus are also perceived by students to support their transformational experiences. As was the case with coordinated studies programs, these settings (for the most part, college offices that regularly deal with students on a face-to-face basis) are seen as facilitating participants' learning and self-discovery. The main difference is that they accomplish this feat in ways that programs do not.

How these non-academic settings facilitate students' experience of transformation can best be seen in their stories. One student, for example, told of having friends who wanted to become filmmakers. He related that they, too, felt they had been well served by Evergreen's teaching and learning culture, even to the point of seeing a profound change take place within themselves. As in the situations we reviewed earlier, students not only learned about their chosen field through participating in Evergreen's culture, they gained a new sense of perspective about themselves and their abilities. The animating characteristic which they found to be especially helpful was the college's tradition of making equipment and other learn-

ing resources equally accessible to all members through a highly accessible delivery system known as Media Loan.

Some of my roommates are filmmakers. At Evergreen it's recommended that your first year you take a Core program, so you study your academic rather than technical interests. So their second year, they took a media program to get hands-on experience. [They also used Evergreen's] Media Loan. [This] is probably the most wonderful thing in the world if you're a budding filmmaker or photographer. You can just go in and check out a camera like a library book. So getting hands-on experience is really feasible.

As is evident in the above story, students view this practice as very supportive to them in their quest to develop their own voice. They view Media Loan as contributing to their academic learning as well as their self-discovery. Not only do they see it as making available an unusual opportunity to get hands-on experiences that are instrumentally valuable to them, they also feel it empowers them symbolically.

Ultimately, it appears that the effect of this ease of access to equipment for all members is that students feel they are able to be serious about their work. In the words of one student, the outcome is that,

There are a lot of students who have done really incredible projects. [For example, one of] my friends is spending this entire year planning and writing a script, pre-shooting, choosing actors and directing a 16-mm experimental film. In most other places, you wouldn't be able to do that until your second year in a graduate film school. He is going to have [this project] on his portfolio before he even gets out of college. That's a huge difference from somebody who has to start out as a grip on a production because they haven't even held a camera before.

Another supportive environment at Evergreen that students identified as a factor contributing to their learning and self-discovery process is Career Development. Specifically, they cited this office as being helpful to them in their search for a meaningful, satisfying sense of direction. The following comments highlight this perspective:

The people at Career Development are excellent for getting counseling on how to apply your academic studies to your later career. That is what Career Development counselors are there for. You sit down [with them] and discuss what is your wildest fantasy of what you want to do and how you could get there?

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The Student Advising Center has a different feel from anywhere on campus. Most of the people there are incredibly friendly with students because they are there to help them. They aren't there just to process paper and do 'bureaucratic' stuff. They're there to really help students get the most out of their educations.

[They're also there] to help appease students' grievances. There are a lot of students who come in who are really disillusioned. [They are] really lost and really frustrated.

They just need a shoulder to support them. The Advising Center is there to help them get back on the right track by [seeing how they can] bring together all of the students' interests.

The Evergreen dorms were also described as having a positive influence on students' learning and self-discovery. Unlike the individual pursuit of voice which is emphasized in other settings, however, this campus environment is perceived as fostering a more collaborative, community-oriented kind of voice.

I think a major thing (which goes on in a lot of schools, but mainly here) is the fact that a lot of people get to learn how to live and how to interact with a group of people in a room. Especially [in Evergreen's dorms], you have a living situation where you are on your own [in terms of] cooking and you have your own community space in a living room or something like that. It's different from living in a dorm where you have one roommate and you spend most of your time outside of your dorm eating, studying, things like that.

Here, you're forced to interact more with your roommates than any other school [I know of]. I think that's an important experience, learning how to interact with different people. Last year [here], I was put in a living situation where I was living with five other people. It was crazy how different each one of us were and how different things mattered to each of us. One person had one idea of what a clean dish was, whereas another person had a different idea of what a clean dish was.

The preceding story alludes to a pattern I have observed in a number of other environments around campus as well. From what I have seen, Evergreen students often find themselves in situations which not only support their individual search for a voice, but facilitate learning how to be an individual within a community of other individuals. Through participating in these settings, they generally learn to respect and accept people's views and feelings which may differ radically from their own. Other settings in which I have seen this pattern include a variety of seminars, First Peoples meetings, and the 1990-91 year graduation planning committee.

There are significant similarities between the kind of support students say they derive from some non-program environments (e.g., the dorms, Media Loan, Career Development, etc.) and that which they have often attributed to a variety of program practices and traditions. These two cultural factors (inviting non-program environments and supportive program traditions) are regarded by participants as potent symbolic forces that can generally be relied upon to support them in their quest to find an appropriate, meaningful and rewarding voice.

Although this optimistic image of Evergreen's culture supporting students transformational experiences appears to be widely shared, it is not the only conception of how things turn out around here. Participants also see a downside to this process. As might be expected, this more cynical image is apparent in their stories and reflections. One form that it may take can be seen in the following accounts. Here students are portrayed as being unduly pressured by their program faculty and classmates rather than feeling supported by them. The reason for this change in perspective is complex. At root, however, it stems from participants' perception that they are being pushed through a pre-defined path rather than

being given the opportunity to discover their own sense of direction. Instead of feeling as if they have been invited to pursue personal interests that may lead to the discovery of a voice over time, these individuals tell of being pressured to take a stand or champion a cause that holds no particular meaning for them.

One second-year student, for example, put it in these terms. He expressed the opinion that there is something about Evergreen's culture which forces students to come to grips with who they are. As he sees it, this can either be beneficial or detrimental. According to him, the latter is likely when students enter the college with a vague sense of their identity. In such a case, he notes, their priorities are not clearly defined and they can be easy prey to those who have a clearly articulated agenda. Thus, the result can be that they feel as if they have been treated insensitively and pressured to take a stand on something.

In the setting at Evergreen, you're really forced to believe in something. If you come here [and] you don't believe deeply in something, really feel strongly about it, you're kind of put in an area where you have to find something you care about and really want to defend.

Students also talked about having other kinds of unpleasant experiences here which they felt hampered their personal transformation and, as a consequence, their development of a voice. For instance, one student talked about how being antagonistically confronted by several people in a seminar had a negative effect on him. "You always have your really strong-willed people who want to dominate and want to attack. I've been personally attacked in a seminar for something that I said by two or three people. That doesn't feel good. No one wants to be personally attacked."

As a result of experiencing several such attacks in seminar, he became somewhat more wary of voicing his views. Rather than helping him to open up and express himself (what he had envisioned seminar would do for him) it had the opposite effect. In his words, "I think that a lot of times you can foresee [an attack] happening [in seminar] over something you want to say about a book. So you don't say it."

While other students have credited faculty caring and concern for students as being a critical variable in their learning and self-discovery process, this student feels he has found that the opposite is also true. In other words, he believes that faculty insensitivity can impede students' personalized discovery process. As he sees it, they feel censored under such conditions. This is an unfortunate turn of events because they may end up being wary of the very environment that they need to look to for support and inspiration.

To back up his assertion, he provided an example that is drawn from an unpleasant, censoring experience he had in a seminar situation. In this particular instance, he believes an opinionated faculty member fostered an attitude of intolerance among some students for anyone who held an opposing point of view.

A lot of times, professors can be very opinionated about the topic at hand. Obviously the faculty picked a [particular] book because they wanted to get a point across. So if you don't believe in the point they're trying to make, it's harder to bring that up. [This is especially true] when a lot of the people in the class may agree with them. Usually

if you're taking a program [in which] you don't agree with the point they're trying to get across, it's harder to open yourself up because of the possibility of being attacked.

On the one hand, a situation of this sort is unfortunate insofar as it thwarts a process of free inquiry for each student, and thus handicaps their learning process. Possibly even more damaging, however, is the potential effect that censorship may have on individuals' self-discovery process. For instance, it may stymie the search for meaning and serendipity that characterizes many of my interviewees' experiences here. Should this be the case, participants' quest for a sense of transformation may ultimately be impaired. Finally, such a downside scenario would run directly counter to the reason many students have given me for why they wanted to come to Evergreen in the first place (see Chapter II).

Despite the many unexpected problems and even injustices they may encounter along the way, however, it appears that students at Evergreen do, by and large, feel that they make progress in their search for a voice that fits them. In fact, the extent to which they may succeed in acquiring a voice can even be seen in little ways. The behavior of longtime Evergreen students, for example, often provides a clue to the fact that they have developed a strong sense of self-confidence and a willingness to question aspects of the world that do not make sense to them. One student described this pattern in the behavior of some Evergreen students he had seen in the nearby town of Olympia.

I've seen lots of students try and challenge certain set up rules and systems. [I think] that's great, you know. You can always tell an Evergreen student in town, even if they are not dressed like one, because they really like to know what they are signing for, what they are paying for, or what's happening to them. I think that's probably why Olympia doesn't always appreciate us as much as they should.

I've been in positions where students will ask, 'What are you doing this for? Why is this this way?' They may not like the answer but at least they got one, or they asked [anyway]. [For example], I witnessed a survey being given on the city bus a couple of months ago. This woman was just handing out pencils and surveys to people, and expecting them to answer the questions. This other woman was like, 'Well, what's this going to be used for? Why are you asking us this?' And because she pressed for one, she got an answer. I thought, 'Good for you!' But [this kind of self-confident behavior] does bother people sometimes.

G. PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

There are several lessons concerning Evergreen's teaching and learning culture which have emerged in this chapter. First, and perhaps foremost, is the insight that students view themselves as having arrived at an experiential plateau. As they see it, this plateau which I have referred to as the "participation learning phase" is the heart of the Evergreen experience. Characterized by intense involvement in coordinated studies programs, seminars, group and individual contracts, and a narrative evaluation process, participation in this phase is the reason most students wanted to come here in the first place. They romanticized being

involved in the college's teaching and learning culture in their discovery stories and lamented the fact that they often did not immediately find it as rewarding as they had envisioned it would be in their initiation accounts. Having survived the vicissitudes of these two previous phases, students reveal in their participation narratives that they are eager to get on with the learning that they came here to do.

After becoming grounded in Evergreen's approach to teaching and learning, the majority of students I interviewed report that they are generally satisfied with their participation experience thus far. They say that they are excited and feel supported by the traditions, practices and ways of doing things in their programs. In addition, they assert that these traditions enable them to feel free to discover, explore and pursue their emerging interests. Along with this, most participants express the belief that these traditions have also helped them to learn two additional things which they feel are important. These are: 1) the value of learning and 2) a strategy for doing it that is both successful and meaningful.

Over a period of time, many students realize that they have also derived a third benefit from their participation in the school's culture. Through their stories, they tell of how Evergreen's culture has facilitated their experiencing an often exhilarating sense of transformation. For the most part, this experience seems to occur after students have acquired a significant amount of proficiency in their chosen area of study and have come to understand their own process of learning. At this point, things frequently just seem to "come together" to students' way of thinking. This, in turn, spurs an exciting discovery, that they are indeed on the path to becoming the inspired, confident and successful learner they set out to be.

Such a discovery is especially exciting at Evergreen, since the identity students come to realize is not that of a pre-defined major. Instead, it is one that they themselves have had a significant hand in creating. In effect, participants come to recognize that they have, metaphorically speaking, "become" their own majors. This realization is highly symbolic and affirming. It says to students that they had to learn a host of distinctive instrumental skills which in turn facilitated their own depth of understanding, creativity and negotiating ability along the way.

Ultimately, the discovery of a self-negotiated self heralds an intellectual coming of age. It is interpreted by students as signifying that they have learned how to make the most of the college's freedom and resources, as well as having figured out ways to creatively survive its constraints. They have experienced a highly personal rite of passage that is, in some respects, distinctive to Evergreen.

The preponderance of such upside participation accounts in this chapter indicates that Evergreen continues to be a symbol by which students gauge their own degree of satisfaction, transformation and self-discovery. The same can be said for members' downside narratives. While these stories may not be as pervasive, they are nonetheless significant in members' participation experiences.

Though the image of a downside in Evergreen's culture has cropped up in earlier chapters, its character becomes clearer, more coherent and more disturbing here. For example, even though participants often perceived a downside scenario during their initiation phase, they could take comfort in the thought that things might improve once they became more

grounded in the college's everyday world of teaching and learning. Should these students come to a point in their Evergreen careers, however, where they sense that these downside ills have not been corrected (particularly after they have invested themselves in the participation phase for some time) they may feel the school has failed them and then grow disgruntled. Instead of viewing their feelings of being lost as a temporary and correctable condition, they may fear it is emerging as a debilitating and permanent setback.

The correlation between participation and transformation is further reinforced by other insights which have also become apparent in this chapter. For instance, we learned that students tell two kinds of experience stories during the course of their participation learning phase. What makes this significant is the fact that each of these reveals a different point of view. One view, as presented in sections A through E of this chapter, highlights the experiences of particular individuals in certain settings who perceive that they have been affected by specific aspects of Evergreen's culture. In Section F, however, we turn to the second type of experience story. Rather than focusing on the "here and now" aspects of specific situations, these accounts take a more distanced and interpretive point of view. They emphasize students' perceptions of the cumulative effect of their participation in Evergreen's approach over an extended period of time.

All in all, students' participation experience narratives provide a number of cultural insights that I believe are useful for better understanding and evaluating Evergreen's teaching and learning culture.

CHAPTER V.

FACULTY PERSPECTIVES ON THE THIRD EXPERIENCE PHASE: PARTICIPATION

This chapter builds on its predecessor in a closely connected fashion. In Chapter IV, the data were gleaned from student experience narratives. Here, the information presented comes from faculty accounts.

Two different kinds of faculty stories are presented. Section A contains accounts which highlight faculty members' perspectives on their students' participation experiences. In Section B, faculty turn their gaze away from their students and reflect on their own participation experiences at Evergreen.

A. A FACULTY VIEW OF TEACHING AND LEARNING AT EVERGREEN

The main shift in point of view in this chapter, from that of students' portrayals of their own experiences to that of faculty discussing their observations of their students, is significant. Whereas students' stories reveal insiders' perspectives of their own world on campus, faculty members' accounts of this same student world reflect an outsider's point of view. As such, these accounts, which I will refer to as faculty observation stories, provide us with a different cut on the same topic: how Evergreen's culture affects teaching and learning on campus.

Faculty observation stories differ from their student counterparts in several ways. One difference is in the narrative voice used within the tales themselves. Students' accounts almost always focus on their own experiences. As such, they are told in the first person and generally highlight individual perceptions and feelings. Interestingly, faculty members were also inclined to talk about their students' experiences, often with the result of downplaying their own. This is reflected in the fact that most of the stories I gathered from faculty were observational accounts of their students' involvement in teaching and learning on campus. Due to their focus, faculty usually presented their stories in the third person. In addition, their accounts tended to express a more dispassionate tone that befits the observational reporting that is their emphasis.

This finding, of course, also reflects the fact that instructors frequently have a broader, more observational stance than their students. Faculty members are in a position to view the various niches that students carve out for themselves. As a result, they are likely to have a more comparative perspective on how well these niches may work for their students and why. (This is not to suggest that teachers' stories are more accurate or credible, only that they are typically broader and more comparative in scope.)

Because of their greater breadth, faculty accounts provide an important key to understanding students' participation learning phase and the sense of transformation they may derive from it. This key is the metaphor of "voice."

How Evergreen culture facilitates
a sense of voice in students:

I first heard the word voice used metaphorically by a couple of longtime faculty and administrators shortly after I arrived on campus. They used it to describe how, when all the variables in a coordinated studies program come together in an ideal manner, students learn in a way that is vivid, exciting and personally meaningful. When I first heard it, the term struck me as communicating some special truth about the school's approach. Over time, my suspicion was confirmed. On a regular basis, I both observed the development of voice among students and was told about it by faculty with respect to their students. In all cases, the metaphor, whether named directly or alluded to through narrative examples, was applied to students' learning experiences. In all instances, it was used to describe the same basic transformational pattern. Essentially, it is a vernacular expression that seems to fit the reality it purports to describe. Because of this, I believe the metaphor of voice is central to this ethnographic study. Not only does it shed light on the nature and meaning of students' experience stories, but, ultimately, it may provide new insights into the subtle workings of Evergreen's teaching and learning culture.

What do Evergreen faculty mean when they apply the metaphor of voice to student learning processes on campus? A useful starting point for answering this question comes from a longtime member who briefly addresses the meaning and history of this metaphor at the college. According to her, "We didn't used to call [this transformational process] finding your voice. This is kind of a new semantics for it. We used to call it finding your own way."

Additional faculty comments further elucidate the metaphor of voice. This metaphoric model of student learning and self-discovery was applied to two principal topics: learning processes and, to a lesser extent, learning outcomes.

According to the faculty view of teaching and learning at Evergreen that emerged from discussions with my key interviewees, the nature and process of developing a voice is special here. What makes it special can be boiled down to a number of animating characteristics, as one member likes to call them, that are distinctive to Evergreen. It is significant that several of these characteristics are often portrayed as being in an oppositional relationship with one another. On the one hand, faculty cite supportive characteristics in Evergreen's culture, such as the freedom for students to create their own "dream" curriculum as well as the academic resources to turn such a dream into a reality. At the other end of the scale, there are also constraints in the culture. These consist of real or perceived obstacles that may seem to threaten students' dream learning reality. The resulting learning experience for students, in this view, is an ongoing dynamic path which they negotiate between these two semantic poles.

With regard to supportive characteristics, faculty viewed a number of these as being significant and interrelated. One longtime member, for example, put three factors at the top of her list: freedom, accident and faith. With respect to freedom, she said,

Freedom of choice is a very important characteristic. [As a student], you are free to choose your direction. It opens up a space [for you]. You aren't handed a course des-

cription for a major and then marched through the hoops. I think freedom of choice is critical.

What makes freedom critical, to her way of thinking, is that it enables students to turn their attention away from a narrow curriculum that is forced upon them (i.e. conventional general education and major requirements). In its place, they can creatively utilize Evergreen's freedom to learn in a more self-affirming way. She believes that, instead of worrying about making it through a maze of requirements, students often find themselves freed to direct their attention toward finding and developing their own interests. As a result, they become receptive to two other factors that are thought to facilitate the creation of voice: accident and faith.

This [may sound] kind of flaky, but there is accident and there is faith. Sometimes, especially in a learning process like this one, you have to have enormous faith that something will come of it. You have to have a spirit of adventure. You have to think that the ride in and of itself, just taking the journey, is enough.

One implication here is that something special may occur when these three factors come together in the right way. In fact, a number of my faculty interviewees suggested that these play an important role in students' developing voice. What is the nature of this role? These factors serve as catalysts which can transform learning into an organic, self-affirming, emergent, multisensory and serendipitous experience. Interestingly, faculty and students often mentioned these same characteristics when they explained how their participation in the college had led them to undergo a distinctive and satisfying transformational experience. More often than not, they referred to this transformation colloquially as their "Evergreen experience."

Though they may also be found outside of the classroom, the catalytic characteristics which facilitate development of voice are viewed as being especially evident inside coordinated studies programs. Here is where they are thought to be most likely to form a kind of synergy when everything works. More often than not things do work, and a special kind of engaging learning environment is the result. Underlying this special environment is a principle referred to by one member as intentionality.

There is a kind of intentionality in a coordinated studies program that forces the development of voice for students. For example, as a student you have made the choice to be in that program. Then within that program you are given more choice as to what your own work will be.

Another longtime faculty member helped to flesh out this learning model by observing that when these catalytic factors come together, a kind of synergy may result. This he referred to as the creation of an intentional milieu. The animating center of this intentional milieu is the coordinated studies format. In the words of one old-timer, "Everything is organized around the coordinated studies format for all practical purposes." Thus, intentionality is communicated symbolically through a number of program practices. These are viewed as either encouraging or requiring students to develop an individual sense of who they are, what they believe and what they want to do. These practices are thought to underlie and animate students' discovery of their own voices.

A helpful interviewee noted that this intentional learning dynamic begins outside of a students' program even though it is related to his or her program experience.

I think that even the basic registration thing where you sign up for one program at a time helps [a student] to do this in the sense of sorting out what you really care about. We say [through the catalog and in other ways], 'We offer this many things this year.' A student has to decide from this list. [Thus, the student] is given a surprisingly free hand in deciding which out of the things we do offer [he or she] is going to do. The choice [of program] matters to the student because whichever program you sign up for, that's the one you're doing for a whole quarter. Your whole credit, your whole academic life, the fun you have intellectually, the satisfactions you get, or the progress you make toward your eventual goals are all wound up in how well this particular thing works. So, it matters to the student.

[Because it matters], the student has to sit down and has to talk about it with other students. [He or she has to ask], 'What's this faculty member like? Did you have a good time working with him? What is he good at? What drawbacks does he have that you can see how you could compensate for or get around?'

An important part of students' learning, in this perspective, comes from making decisions that do or do not propel one further along in a desired direction, a direction that may lead to a sense of voice.

Once ensconced within a program, the characteristics of freedom, accident and faith are perceived by several of my interviewees to once again play a role in the construction of voice. By this time, however, students are likely to be actively looking for their voice in their program-related work. "The individualized projects that students take on [are important]. It's the thing where you define your own work and then you do it. [In this way], you find out whether you can do it or not."

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I think that the greatest long-term growth [for students] is stimulated in the programs. Seminars, individual projects and group projects force developmental issues in a way that large lectures do not.

As suggested by the previous comment, a student's development of a voice stems from his participation in an interactive, student-centered learning process. What makes it work is that students who are freed to pursue their own voice become actively involved in the here-and-now hubbub of their everyday academic life. One aspect of this hubbub is especially significant in the process: learning to risk bumping into and then steering around obstacles in one's learning environment. A description of this process follows:

Along with voice, there's also some kind of way of probing and interacting with your environment [that students learn here] so that the voice that results is not just a solo, individualistic, 'Here's what I think' kind of voice, but something that's negotiated. I think our own graduates are terrific negotiators. The environment requires them to question.

In other words, the Evergreen environment confronts students with a seductive but tension-producing learning milieu. Essentially, it invites them to give a free hand to their imaginations and to try going for their dream scenarios. At the same time, however, the program environment also puts them in positions where they alternate back and forth between two kinds of experiences. On the one hand, there are those which they view as being congruent with their dreams and therefore immediately satisfying. Conversely, there are other experiences which they perceive as frustrating obstacles that block them from achieving their dreams. In the view of several longtime members, this zigzagging experience in which students are moved back and forth between enjoying the freedom in their program and then bumping up against constraints contributes to the development of voice. As one of these individuals put it,

There need to be legitimate constraints on [students'] freedom of choice. [Because of this], intentional constraints are built in. You have the demands of seminar and the demands of doing a group project with others who [may seem to be] jackasses [to a particular student. Another built-in constraint is that] students generally think one of their faculty members is really great, one is so-so, and the other should be fired. These factors seem to create an intentional milieu [in coordinated studies programs]. You don't decide to put a bad faculty member in each program. And the 'bad' one may be terrific in another combination or for another student.

In this perspective, faculty support the creation of voice by setting the stage for a program culture to evolve that presents students with an "intentional" world. The fact that this world is by nature oppositional in character forces students to learn to make critical choices on their own. In this way, coordinated studies programs not only promise students a significant amount of freedom (along with the academic resources to enjoy that freedom), they also impose a variety of constraints on that freedom. These constraints, in turn, pose problems that have to be solved by making choices about how to proceed.

Part of using [this freedom] well is having to problem-solve once you reach constraints. You get the idea of making your own choices from [a variety of experiences in] your school. It gives you permission to make your own choices. In fact there is an expectation that you will do so.

The importance attributed to students' experiencing the right amount of dissonance in their Evergreen education is suggested by an observation made by a key interviewee.

We have this culture clash at Evergreen between dissonance and hospitality. [Right now] there is a push toward hospitality. To me it's all about making people comfortable. I think that is nice. But I also have anecdotal experience from working with many, many Greeners where I think the critical factor in their development was dissonance.

I don't mean rampaging dissonance. Some cautiousness on the part of their faculty and even their peers at times is critical. An example could be [the student saying, 'I feel] this is a risk-taking place and I need support' and getting it. Not in a hand holding, 'Let me do this for you' kind of way, but in a 'I think you can do this, you

know' way. Something [in the way of a faculty response] like, 'It's a reach and it's going to be really hard, but I think you can do it.'

Like the learning that transpires within coordinated studies programs, out-of-classroom experiences are viewed as potentially contributing to students' development of voice as well. As one longtime member stated,

If you don't make a judgement that the voice someone develops is on a continuum of good and bad (either for them, for the people with whom they associate or for life in general) then I think that that voice can be developed just as effectively outside the classroom. Wherever it is developed, I think it is important that students leave with as much certainty about their voice as they can through their out-of-classroom experiences.

Out-of-classroom learning, however, is also viewed by some members as posing risks that potentially may be more serious than those which occur within academic programs. One longtime observer, for instance, expressed concern that students could be lured from more substantive in-program learning and thus ultimately be derailed in the development of their voice.

I've seen students 'major in Evergreen' as I call it. I've seen them get lost in the political interests [that exist] in this institution and therefore miseducated. If I look at a transcript and the student has done an individual contract with [an administrative department on campus] for an entire year, then I question that. [A transcript like that suggests that] there isn't enough of a balance between academic, social, political and spiritual development. If I look at a transcript and see four years of that I feel very sad indeed [because] most of the learning was over after the first year and the rest was just practice. But when I look at a transcript, and here is my bias, in which at least 80% of the learning has been through the academic structures of the institution and then 20% from other sources, I think it's pretty exciting.

This perspective sees the Evergreen approach working except when challenging constraints are not imposed on students' explorations. When such constraints are lacking, the same flexible structures that give students room to pursue their dreams can instead function as a haven for doing what is merely comfortable, easy and already known. The result of this, according to my interviewees, is that the construction of voice can be short-circuited because the student is not stretched in a way that facilitates meaningful learning and self-discovery.

Is this educational risk inherent in the Evergreen approach? Not according to one of my key faculty interviewees. This individual, who has been teaching here almost since the college opened its doors, sees a positive alternative. In his view, students will take advantage of Evergreen's freedom in a way that facilitates the development of their own voice when four things happen: first, that they are made aware that they are responsible for their own learning; second, that they find themselves in a situation which inspires them to want to learn; third, that out of this inspirational environment they discover a compelling personal vision; and fourth, that this vision, in turn, reinforces the element of excitement in their learning.

With respect to the first item (individual student responsibility for their own learning), one interviewee had this to say:

All of us as faculty articulate to the students that a lot of the responsibility for what you learn rests with you, the student. We're not here to pour information into 'passive vessels.' You, the student, bear a significant responsibility for helping to define your own learning. It was not until I had been at Evergreen for several years that I began to see the power [that being responsible could have] for the learner. It necessitates a real attitudinal change. We see it in the junior transfer students who come in from other schools and how they still want to be told what to read, what to think, what to do to get an 'A' on a test. When you rephrase to them the issue ('Well, what are you interested in?' or 'What sense do you make of this?'), slowly I think we get through to them that a lot of the construction of learning rests with what it is the students themselves can bring to it.

Enter the second variable that some faculty believe plays a role in successful learning at Evergreen: inspiration. Upon recognizing one's own responsibility in the construction of voice, personal inspiration is thought to become a critical shaping force in that process. This inspiration comes from learning that students view as being fun. This, in turn, is linked to personal satisfaction.

Having fun is almost a put-down term in academia. That's not supposed to be what you are about. One of our underlying things here is that we've actually discovered the ways in which it is productive for education to be fun, intellectually and academically. What it boils down to [for students] then is having fun and getting that personal enjoyment and satisfaction.

In this model, having fun with what one is learning may lead to students' discovery of the next factor: the motivating value of a personal vision. Several of the faculty I came to know believe that students are subtly prodded by the Evergreen culture to begin looking for such a vision almost as soon as they get here. As one member put it, "We keep asking students to have visions here." This request is often made symbolically through a variety of program routines and interpersonal interaction rituals.

One such ritual is an active, face-to-face questioning of students by faculty within a supportive context (e.g., seminar). It includes the asking of such questions as, "What do you want?" "What are you after?" "How do you think the program is going?" Interaction rituals of this sort draw students out, urge them to reflect and introspect, and discover that their sense of things matters.

This discovery connects with the fourth theme noted above: student excitement over learning. Over a period of time, continuous exposure to such interactive, student-centered teaching and learning routines helps put students in touch with their dreams. This, in the view of my informants, often leads to the discovery that learning can be exciting when you are pursuing something that is personally meaningful.

[As faculty], we've worked ourselves into a situation where excitement is a thing we know to go after. It's good for the students to be in a situation where they're asked

to go after it, and to be in a situation where they're around faculty who are looking for that kind of intellectual and personal excitement.

Earlier in this section, I mentioned that the view of teaching and learning I obtained from my key faculty interviewees stressed two aspects of students' Evergreen experience: learning processes and learning outcomes. As can be seen from the preceding pages, much of their thinking was directed toward learning processes, especially with respect to the metaphor of voice. This is understandable, since faculty are primarily involved in facilitating these learning processes on a day-to-day basis.

Learning outcomes, however, were also considered to be extremely important by my key informants. Although my research is principally focused on the cultural forms and processes that affect teaching and learning at Evergreen, I will present a few selected faculty comments with respect to learning outcomes. The reason for this is that, in reality, the two are inextricably linked. In addition, these comments shed additional light on the construction of voice.

Two learning outcomes are especially worthy of note. The first is directly observable in the creation of voice detailed above. This is the resultant level of personal satisfaction that students may experience while still at the college. It evolves as faculty and students together manage to find and/or fashion the various animating characteristics (e.g., freedom, accident and faith, as well as individual responsibility, inspiration, vision and excitement) in their intellectual pursuits on campus. According to one longtime faculty member, this often leads to students' experiencing a form of serendipity. "The serendipity students experience [stems from the] sense that thinking about things [in this way] pays off, that you can find some stuff out about things that you care about."

This serendipity is then linked to the kinds of skill-building that goes on here. It is also connected to the confidence students feel as a consequence of their acquired skills. "Over the span of several years we do seem to foster certain very good kinds of development in students. [A kind of] articulateness and a sense of being able to go after things really happens."

In addition, there is the voice that students have evolved in program situations. This serves as a frame which gives meaning to the skills they have also acquired there. In the view of one founding member, this sort of learning is more complex. As he articulated it, "I think that the voice that comes out of this series of [learning] experiences [at Evergreen] is more developmentally complex."

Continuing on this theme, this individual related another perception.

I think that it goes back to the founding principle that the college wanted to make an intervention in rugged individualism. This interaction [that students are forced to do] of having to do their own work as well as working with others was very intentional. It can be excruciating, in many ways. My own values would say that in the long term, in terms of what the world demands of us both publicly and privately, that is a pretty damn fine combination.

In the final analysis, the overwhelming majority of my faculty contacts believed that students experience a transformation through their participation in Evergreen's teaching and learning culture which, in turn, supports their discovery of a voice. One member, for example, said, "I think that really, really often the students really are learning something and getting somewhere."

One final note. A more detailed inventory of animating characteristics that are perceived to underlie students' discovery of voice can be found in the Appendix to this chapter.

B. A FACULTY VIEW OF FACULTY PARTICIPATION AT EVERGREEN

The previous section of this chapter presented a cultural model of teaching and learning at Evergreen that I was able to piece together as a result of my faculty interviews. This section, however, marks a change in focus. Instead of hearing from faculty on the topic of their students' participation, we move to their perceptions of their own experiences.

An optimistic view of teaching at Evergreen:

For the most part, the faculty comments I collected reveal a predominantly optimistic view of teaching at Evergreen. The reflections which follow highlight a variety of cultural themes, values and animating characteristics that are perceived to make teaching here a rewarding and successful experience.

A good place to begin an analysis of faculty participation is with an expression that symbolically summarizes the kind of meaning members say they derive from their experience here. In this respect, the following statement is an appropriate starting point: "The appeal [of teaching] at Evergreen is the opportunity to explore and then offer some innovative, different views of what learning might be."

What is referred to here is a conception of teaching that I have found to be generally shared among my informants. From this perspective, teaching is facilitative. Its goal is to offer novel and stimulating learning opportunities to students. This approach gives students the feeling of having greater control over the direction that their studies may take. It is an approach that stresses student-negotiation of what is appropriate learning rather than faculty-definition of what should be learned. Thus, as the comment reveals, learning, not teaching, is the end goal. In this scheme, effective teaching is viewed ideally as being an unobtrusive vehicle that encourages certain kinds of unusually reflective learning to happen.

Underlying this conception of teaching and learning are a number of broadly shared values and animating characteristics. Of these, freedom and flexibility are among the most prominent in faculty accounts.

There basically aren't any real blocks to creative work or designing curriculum here. No one ever tells you that you can't do something unless you personally have proven

that it was terrible the last time you did it. Then they say, 'Wait a minute, you can't do that again. Remember what happened [the last time you tried it]?' But no one ever prevents you from doing something [for the first time].

Other comments portrayed personal freedom and institutional flexibility to be central to faculty members' participation experiences. For some, freedom meant the opportunity to integrate their own interests and to assist their students doing the same thing. For example, "I guess for me personally what teaching here means is to bring together different parts of my intellectual and emotional life and make them more whole than they would be otherwise."

Other participants emphasized the important influence that freedom here has on teaching and learning from another perspective. Several saw it as a lack of social control. "The beauty of Evergreen, in my mind, is that teaching and learning have no restrictions. The stuff that will bum you out is if you fail to look for options. Of course, the kiss of death is if you are unwilling to change and not willing to take some risks."

Related to the themes of freedom and flexibility is the desire to let things happen in a less controlled way in program settings. This approach is viewed as having an implicit learning value. According to one individual, "I think some of the true good experimental disasters are some of the best things that can happen."

What can be gained, as this comment suggests, from letting things happen organically without strict control systems? Principally, by probing the limits of what is possible in this way, students can figure out just how much freedom they actually have to work within. They may also learn that the freedom accorded them here makes personal success or failure equally possible outcomes. Unless, that is, they learn to tip the scale toward success by becoming responsible for their own learning.

Freedom and flexibility also emerge as fundamental values and organizing principles in faculty participation stories that focus on the founding of the college. As is the case with etiological tales in general, these provide models for action and thought that have a special kind of persuasive power. Through their narration, such stories present and legitimize core cultural values, perspectives and ways of doing things. They serve as a kind of historical canon with respect to what it has meant, and may still mean, to participate at Evergreen as a faculty member:

The following founding story is a case in point. It recounts the founders' struggles to create a cohesive institutional culture while at the same time allowing room for individual values and visions. As such, it reveals a great deal about the character of the founders as well as the institutional culture they helped to create. Interestingly, the scenario it presents of how things get done here is reminiscent of patterns we have seen in students' stories: what begins as a struggle between different visions of reality is shown to be resolved in a way that tries to support community as well as individuality.

The founding brought together a group of people who were not diverse except on one dimension. That dimension was personality. And they were a bunch of strong-willed suckers. What happened in the first stages [of the process] was a full exploration of their different ideas about what a college education should be. They might have

played touch football during rush hour, had their potlucks, held hands and danced in a circle, but boy when they sat around the planning table, these 18 people [were] just so different.

There was finally a breakthrough [in the founding proceedings] sometime around Christmas. Mervyn Cadwallader gave the planning faculty a book, Experiment at Wisconsin, as a gift, along with the assignment to read it over Christmas break. That was the beginning of the agreement.

What they finally agreed on was the structure that eventually got called coordinated studies. That was because it left their differences about everything else intact. It could accommodate anything anybody wanted to do. So the core of the curriculum was basically a set of agreements about structures that would make a better education. [Essentially, the agreement was] about how things academic should be in relation to one another.

According to the narrator of the above story, the way this agreement came about is highly symbolic, as is the distinctive Evergreen coordinated studies approach it engendered. Because of this, my interviewee looks upon this agreement as the heart of the founding process.

The centrality of the coordinated studies format is upheld in other faculty members' views of the principal animating characteristics of teaching and learning at the college as well. "Everything is organized around coordinated studies programs, for all practical purposes. Even though there are other modes of studies, people's energies, focus and flow is in that context."

A consequence of this approach is that it has virtually enshrined individualism as a core value in some respects. For instance, the freedom and flexibility granted by Evergreen's culture to pursue one's own passion and find one's own voice is a primary draw for many students and faculty. The narrator of the above founding story also subscribes to this view. According to this person, by settling on the coordinated studies format,

[The founders ensured that they] could do what they damn well pleased, as long as they could find someone else to do it with them. I think about it now in this way: each year they write a sonnet. You know, the form is prescribed at some level, and each year they just fill it in.

A reflection of just how individualistic the culture is perceived to be may be seen in the following story. According to the narrator, even the mission of the college was interpreted differently by the various founding members.

There's been a lot of dialogue about whether we had a mandate to be innovative or not. Governor Evans declared the need for a "flexible and sophisticated educational instrument as opposed to the vast and immobile establishment" and expressed the need to "unshackle our educational thinking from traditional patterns." This was written in 1969. [If] you listen to the tapes made of the planning faculty, there was lots of dissension. There was no clear vision of this place.

One topic on which there was dissension, according to one founding faculty, was the philosophy of education that should hold sway at the college.

On the one hand, ----- thought that no one should ever read a book [because] it was going to ruin him forever. On the other hand, there were [other faculty members] who thought that that was pretty much all that students should do. And then, there was every kind of opinion in between these two.

Here again, freedom and flexibility emerge as core values, as does individuality. All three are presented as being fundamental to Evergreen's institutional culture.

In spite of the philosophical disagreements which stemmed from individuals' different views of teaching and learning during the founding process, founding members were able to agree on certain fundamental educational principles. These included several principles that remain important to this day: collaboration, an interdisciplinary approach and putting theory into practice.

From as early as the end of the planning year there were three basic notions that were shared almost universally. The first was the premise that knowledge, that knowing as we had previously conceived of it, was in fact unified. It should be unified and not fragmented. That was the premise that underlay our opposition to departments, divisions, disciplines and all of that kind of stuff.

We believe that the nature of the world is interdisciplinary, and that what we have had to go through to get back to that [vision] is an aberration. We've spent 150 years driven by the model of the German university of the late 19th century [which led to] the development of disciplines which fragmented the practice and the pursuit of knowledge. So, our notion was that knowledge should be, and the world inherently is, interdisciplinary.

The second one was that teaching and learning were social and dependant upon collaboration. The very social nature of teaching and learning required collaboration, and that collaboration was not an end but a necessary means. It was what had to be in order for us to learn about the world, how to be in the world, and how to make, save, or destroy a world.

A third one that I would add at the same level as those two was that there had to be some connection between theory and practice. In order for there to be a reasonable balance, there had to be this projection of theory and practice.

According to my interviewees, these educational principles were not simply rhetorical. The founding members were committed to putting them into practice in every conceivable way. With respect to collaboration, for example, one participant illustrated the determination of founding members to apply this principle outside the formal setting of the classroom with the following anecdote:

[In practice], what collaboration meant was that whenever I designed a program, or worked with anybody on designing a program, there were a variety of people in the ini-

tial discussions. When we put together [a program] in the planning year, one of the chief contributors was a biologist. One of the major people I looked to for advice and called on to help design the thing was a political scientist. A therapist-education person worked in my office. He was there with me every day sort of kibitzing on this thing. People [working on putting together other programs] would come to me and say, 'Come help us think about a literary text that would help us open up or demonstrate this topic or this issue.' So from day one, when we started to think about curriculum, we would work together and across disciplines.

At the same time, nearly all of our early programs had built into them work-retreat kinds of experiences, internship-type stuff and other [collaborative] mentoring situations. [These were] aimed at trying to activate the ideas [that were presented in the program].

For example, [one] program had been together about two or three months in the fall of '71. By this time, we had already had visits from Native American folks in the region talking about Indian life. We were reading about Indian life, Latin people, and Chicano life. We were really into the subject matter. We were at school one day when we got a call from [Native Americans at] the Nisqually Delta. [The caller said] that a little tiny piece of tribal land out there in the Delta was being flooded by the Nisqually River because the Army Corps of Engineers had dumped hundreds of tons of concrete [that were] left over from some building project into the river. That call came in around 9:00 or 10:00 one morning when it was raining like hell. We dropped what we were doing [in our program], grabbed our students en masse, and split to the Nisqually Delta. We went out there and worked for three days [to help] barricade those folks' land so the river wouldn't wash it away.

Now that, I thought (we thought) was acting out what we were studying. There were pink students, black students, yellow students out there, not just Indians. This wasn't something that we were doing just for the Indians. This was also for ourselves. [It was] for the world that we wanted to be in. The fact that this community could call us, and assume that we would do something, represented what we thought we wanted to be about.

In the above perspective, collaboration is a symbol that stands for a multiplicity of values along with ways of thinking and behaving. Among other things, the approach to teaching and learning represented by this term is idealistic. It is predicated on a vision of the world that we wanted to be in. This was a world that was actively created by the program co-participants according to an ideal sense of how things should be. They did not merely accept a reality that was perceived to be imperfect and then passively study it. Instead, according to this portrayal, they acted on their principles and tried to participate in such a way that the situation was better when they left it than it had been when they first encountered it.

The scenario presented in this story of faculty and students collaboratively going about the business of teaching and learning in an alternative, idealistic way is not unique in Evergreen's folklore. This participation pattern is reflected in a number of other stories. Two more examples of this distinctive Evergreen scenario follow:

In the spring of that same year, we took the entire program student body up to Tacoma and spent two or three days doing a big community clean-up project along with some folks at the Center up on the Hilltop. That was a planned activity built in by design. We worked with those folks to decide who was going to do what, where and when. We took those [students up there] en masse and helped those folks at the Center do that job. We tried to apply stuff [in ways like this].

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Other faculty did other kinds of things. [One faculty member] took a bunch of students and went down there on the Columbia River and moved a whole town. The Army Corps of Engineers was putting in another piece of the Bonneville [dam] project and were going to flood this whole area. [These Evergreen faculty and students worked together to] help the community decide where to move the town, how to move it, and this and that. They moved the whole God damned thing. Those are ways that we started to act out, to objectify, what it was that we were trying to learn and trying to teach.

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As regards stuff in the class room (texts, ideas, ways of learning), I had black students, pink students and Indian students reading the I Ching and trying to conceive of the world as different from the Western Judeo-Christian vision that they had been taught from the beginning. All of this stuff was collaborative. It was also interdisciplinary [and included] a combination of theory and practice. That was the kind of stuff that we tried to do.

Based on the number of stories I collected that present this basic pattern, i.e. of Evergreen faculty and students working together and applying what they were studying to prevent an underdog from being victimized by a powerful and insensitive establishment institution), the scenario indicates a way of doing, thinking and feeling about things that is distinctive to Evergreen's culture.

A second way in which collaboration figures into faculty participation experience emerges in other stories and comments. Central to this second form of collaboration is the experience of working together with colleagues, even without students being present. What is important about this experience, according to faculty, is the opportunity to be on the receiving end of teaching. Several reflections on this experience follow:

One of the great things about Evergreen is being allowed to sit around [as a faculty member and watch] while somebody else teaches. [After being here a while], I realized what a valuable experience that is.

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One of the animating qualities [I appreciated the most] was that what we [as faculty] were doing, we were doing collaboratively. Even when the students weren't [working together collaboratively], we were.

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I thought the workshops we did the first quarter were both exciting and exhausting. These workshops were [organized] in small groups. Each of the faculty attended the other two faculty members' workshops. I found it enormously challenging. What you had to do was teach in such a way that people who had absolutely no background in your field could get something out of it, [all the while] not boring the people who did have a background [in this area]. It was difficult to pull off. It forced me to teach in a way that I never had before. I worked hard on those workshops, read books, talked to other teachers, and was happy with the way they went.

I especially loved going to [another program faculty member's] drawing workshop. Being right there alongside the students, knowing no more and in some cases a lot less than they did, and still doing the structured assignments was a real pleasure. It was very important [for me] to be on the receiving end of teaching.

Flux and spontaneity are also thought to be symbolic of Evergreen's approach. This is made evident by the fact that I collected a number of stories from faculty in which these two interrelated characteristics are prominently expressed. Along with flexibility, these two characteristics highlight the ongoing dynamic character of teaching and learning at Evergreen. How dynamic do members perceive the school to be? "People have been predicting, ever since we started, that we would ossify within the next five years. Things actually haven't settled, though. There isn't anything that's really frozen up. The pot just goes on bubbling."

Finally, there were some faculty members who held what might be referred to as a rosy image of the school in their stories. One participant, for instance, observed this characteristic in his own behavior. "I often find myself telling people how excited I am by the opportunities here. It is pretty easy to cast a gilded, glowing view of Evergreen."

A more skeptical view of teaching at Evergreen:

Some of my faculty interviewees acknowledged that they also have concerns and even misgivings about certain aspects of Evergreen's teaching and learning culture. For example, the same individual who contributed the very positive final quote in the last section also noted that,

When I meet with prospective faculty candidates, I deliberately make sure I show them my excitement [about Evergreen] and yet identify many of my concerns. I do not want them to be surprised [by what they find]. Then I say, 'You take the risk [to come here]. You take the gamble.'

That some faculty who claim to be enthusiastic supporters of the school's approach also have reservations of this magnitude about teaching here indicates a second, downside image of the college. It reveals a recognition that negative things do happen at Evergreen, despite its idealistic bent. What elements of everyday teaching experience here could account for such a conflicted image of the school?

The downside image that I found among faculty reveals two basic themes of dissatisfaction. First, members complain of the ongoing intensity of teaching here. In addition, there is disgruntlement about the various contradictions that are perceived to exist between the college's idealistic rhetoric and the way things sometimes happen in everyday reality.

This downside image is best articulated through several faculty stories. These accounts focus on the nature and extent of faculty fatigue. According to my interviewees, this phenomenon stems from the open-ended nature of Evergreen's interdisciplinary programs. As one participant put it, the problem is that there is too much expected of faculty and, as a result, they continually feel tired and over worked. "There were lots of trade-offs in the beginning. The founders will tell you about all that. They worked through all that stuff. But the problem [remains] that everyone gets tired doing all this [teaching] work and rotating into administrative positions."

In addition to feeling burdened by the perception that too many great things are expected of them, some people pointed to another stress-producing problem: they believe that teaching here has certain attendant risks not found in more conventional settings.

I think the faculty have taken an enormous risk to come here. I think the degree to which they have to be vulnerable to each other's opinions, judgements and scrutiny on a daily basis in the classroom is just extraordinary. They have to work in front of each other all of the time. [Because of this], they bear the scrutiny of their peers and of their students.

A number of faculty pointed out that trying to live up to the college's rhetorical ideals can be exhausting. Those who hold this view indicate that they sometimes are overwhelmed by feeling that they should constantly question everything they think and do to make sure they are not falling short of the ideal model of an Evergreen faculty member. Over time, according to these individuals, such constant self-scrutiny can lead to fatigue.

Other characteristics of teaching at Evergreen were also perceived to lead to fatigue and frustration. Several members, for example, cited the freedom and flexibility that is so pervasive in the academic arena as also being a factor in this respect. Though they credited it with having a positive impact on student learning, they noted that this animating characteristic also makes it hard to ever feel completely settled here. As one participant observed, "Part of [what's] draining and demanding [about] being on the faculty here is that it's a somewhat unsettled life to lead."

One reason why teaching at Evergreen may be perceived as unsettling is the fact that the school's educational values sometimes run counter to those in more mainstream institutions. This can lead to feelings of anxiety which stem from transgressing conventional academic taboos.

The first few times that you lecture [in an interdisciplinary program setting] about something that you don't really know very well are nerve-wracking. This is because you don't know whether it's going to be OK to be less than completely authoritative, having come, like everyone does, out of graduate school where being absolutely right is the main value. So there's a fair amount of pressure here on people as teachers.

Other faculty members noted other ways in which Evergreen's freedom and flexibility can be disorienting for newcomers. Several mentioned the fluid, everchanging nature of program life and the unusual contingency approach to teaching that this may require.

I think this a hard place to start teaching. You've got this open program structure where you don't know what you're going to be doing exactly in several weeks. You have a framework, but you haven't got it tightened down. It must be very hard on someone who's just starting out teaching.

In addition to the stress that can stem from the open, often undefined environment, faculty also mentioned another factor. This is that people feel as if their work is never done. Because faculty are generally engaged by what they are teaching, and because this engagement is heightened by the fact that program teaching and design are collaborative endeavors, the workload that many accept has a way of repeatedly growing out of control. On top of this, committee participation and other kinds of college governance work also claim a lot of time. This perception that there is so much going on and so much to do can be counterproductive to the kind of self-reflective process that programs are intended to inspire among faculty as well as students. "It's the maintenance issues of everyday life here, [just] keeping everything going, that makes people so worn out that they don't design [new programs] anymore. They just kind of fall into routines."

Despite these recognized downsides, longtime faculty did not feel unduly affected by the heavy workload, dynamic environment, constant scrutiny and idealistic burden as part and parcel of teaching here. For the most part, "old-timers" acknowledged that these aspects of teaching at Evergreen do pose obstacles that must be overcome. By and large, however, they do not view contradictions of this sort as being insurmountable. To their way of thinking, individual faculty simply need to figure out how to creatively work around such constraints.

[The pressure of teaching here can become] rewarded pressure in the sense that, if you can find your personal way to reconcile things (recognize and deal with your more destructive motivations and make the most out of the less destructive ones, figure out how far you're willing to go in terms of intellectual comfort and discomfort, find a way of working in this interdisciplinary way with people from other fields who may talk in a different way or care about different things), then there can be a tremendous sense of discovery and payoff.

Other faculty criticisms revolved around perceived contradictions between the college's idealistic rhetoric and everyday institutional realities. Plainly put, some feel that Evergreen does not live up to its professed ideals. For example, although there is a lot of written and oral rhetoric about the value of a sense of community, some view the campus as lacking in this quality. The reason for this, in the words of another longtime member, is as follows:

Probably one of the most telling criticisms of Evergreen is that, despite our rhetoric of community, this is a place where individualism is much more highly acted out and stressed than at other places. People come to Evergreen because they see it as a refuge for individualism. This includes students, faculty and staff.

The gist of this perceived contradiction can be articulated in a few words. As one faculty member put it, "Even though we have a strong rhetoric of community, the actual community is very tenuous."

How deeply felt this perception of a contradiction between community and individualism is among some members is revealed by the sentiment with which they express it. For instance, one individual expressed an opinion in a way that reflected a lot of frustration: "Evergreen has to recognize up front that it is just pathologically in favor of independence."

One of the arguments cited in favor of this perception is that new faculty often have a difficult time getting oriented and feeling both settled and accepted here. Some feel that this is because there is little actual sense of community on campus, despite the rhetoric supporting it.

If you already have a sense of your own independence, the transition [for new faculty to Evergreen] is rough, but it is manageable. But, because many of our family backgrounds may not be so autonomous [and individualistic], not only is the transition rough but the continual adaptation process is tough.

Other complaints which stem from the community-individualism schism include, "Our system of government used to be run by cliques,"; "Personal diplomacy was the most important lesson to learn as a dean to protect your flank," and "The college was set up so no one could checkmate your initiative."

Given the emphasis placed on collaboration at Evergreen, such contradictions between a supportive community ideal and a sometimes alienating individualistic reality can have a negative impact on teaching, learning, and, more generally, on the perceived quality of everyday life on campus. Just how negatively this perceived impact may be is revealed in these comments: "When we [at the college] have to act in a unified way, we can't do it, because somebody can always undermine any kind of cohesive action"; "The faculty, for the most part, do not broadly socialize with one another"; and "One of the hardest things to do in a program is to get students to recognize that they have community interests and then act together."

In spite of these misgivings and concerns, the majority of faculty with whom I spoke still found themselves excited by what they believe can and sometimes does happen at Evergreen. Paraphrasing what they have told me, I would express their perspective this way: even if it is not always a satisfying experience, it is often stimulating and interesting. As one faculty member said, "I like it [here]. Whatever Evergreen is, it's not boring."

C. FACULTY PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

At the outset of this chapter, I noted that it was a sequel to the previous one. While both chapters focus on the participation experience phase, the former highlights students' views on this topic while the current chapter reveals faculty members' perspectives. Together, these two perspectives complement one another. They present a clearer and more

detailed view of what students and faculty consider to be the most critical time period during their respective Evergreen careers.

Two principal findings are reported in this chapter. Both became apparent through a content analysis of the stories I gathered from faculty members. The first finding emerged from the more analytical, third-person accounts I collected. These I dubbed "faculty observation narratives." Unlike the insiders' views presented in the experience stories which have thus far appeared throughout this report, these tales reflect the perspective of an outsider (i.e. faculty) on the participation experience of another group (i.e. students).

Significantly, this outsider perspective complements students' own image of their participation in a number of respects. For example, both groups recognize that students frequently undergo a self-affirming transformation as they become immersed in Evergreen's approach to teaching and learning. Both agree that this transformation often takes the form of students becoming excited, engaged and more confident as they learn to define, negotiate and then pursue their interests within the context of coordinated studies programs, seminars, contracts, and narrative evaluations. Finally, both students' participation experience accounts and faculty members' observation stories reveal how a host of animating characteristics (practices, routines and other traditions) support, and occasionally thwart, this distinctive learning process.

Despite these similarities, however, faculty observation stories also reveal a fundamental difference between the way students see their transformational experiences at Evergreen and how faculty view the same phenomenon. Whereas students' understandings of this transformational learning process principally emerge from their own experiences, faculty members' interpretations are based on observations of several generations of students living through the same kinds of experiences. Because of this, instructors generally have a broader basis for describing and comparing students' paths during their participation phase.

This global point of view is equally valuable for understanding Evergreen's culture. For example, the metaphor used by some faculty to describe the transformation they see students undergoing helped me to understand many previously unexplainable stories and observations. That metaphor is voice.

Finding one's voice, as my interviewees referred to it, is a complex developmental process. To begin with, it requires immersion in Evergreen's culture. According to this perspective, as students become enculturated in the school's approach, they begin to recognize that there are many possible directions they might explore while here. Over time, they may gain an increasingly clear sense of their interests and abilities, as well as which directions would best facilitate the development of these interests and abilities. Once they have learned to use Evergreen's resources creatively, students are perceived to be able to negotiate a path of learning that increases their understanding of the exterior world and of their own self-hood.

Faculty members' observational stories also identify and describe a number of cultural characteristics that support such an educational journey. Interestingly, these tally with those cited by students to a considerable degree. For example, faculty credited the fact that students are accorded a great deal of freedom to pursue their interests as being of great significance. Similarly, they stressed the important role played by the flexible, supportive and stimu-

lating environment that is often found in Evergreen programs. Along with these positive attributes, faculty also noted that a certain amount of dissonance in students' experience can be valuable. More often than not, they felt that program environments should question and challenge what students think and say in such a way that they are forced to continually reflect on and revise their evolving conceptions of reality vis-a-vis assignments and seminar discussions. Over time, faculty asserted, these factors become catalysts that facilitate a serendipitous way of learning. This, in turn, is thought to contribute to students' discovery of a meaningful and viable voice.

In addition to observation stories, I also gathered a number of participation experience narratives from faculty. These reveal faculty members' views of their own participation experiences. By analyzing these faculty accounts of their own everyday life world on campus, a number of interesting parallels emerge between their experience and that of their students. Overall, we find a complementary view of Evergreen's culture.

The complementary nature of faculty and student views extends to the way teaching and learning is perceived to happen at Evergreen. For example, faculty reported viewing their teaching here as being primarily facilitative. In fact, the instructors I interviewed said they primarily see their role as supporting students' personal quests for knowledge and identity rather than trying to define and manage it for them. The upsides to this approach include being constantly stimulated and feeling gratified at seeing students really making progress along their chosen paths. These views, of course, mirror what students expressed to me through their own stories.

Underlying this approach to teaching and learning, according to my faculty interviewees, are a number of animating characteristics. Freedom and flexibility in coordinated studies programs were frequently mentioned. In fact, one founding member went so far as to credit these characteristics as being the central animating principles of Evergreen's culture. This belief stems from the perception that freedom and flexibility to pursue and articulate an unconventional vision were at the heart of the founding process. By extension, members also view these characteristics as having an important ongoing influence on the nature of the coordinated studies concept that the founders put into practice. While students I interviewed could not, of course, tie these characteristics to the founding process itself, they did view them as being central to their own participation experiences on campus.

Other animating characteristics were also linked by faculty to the values and ways of doing things that emerged from the founding process. Three of these are foci mentioned in Evergreen's own assessment efforts: an interdisciplinary approach, a collaborative way of doing things, and putting theory into practice. From stories that highlight these foci, a distinctive, idealistic participation scenario emerged. This was especially evident in the stories of founding members and other old-timers. Here, Evergreen faculty and students were portrayed as working collaboratively to explore and reshape their thinking about the world. This way of doing things was viewed as often leading participants to alternative interpretations of American society, its impact(s) on people and the environment, as well as new ideal images of how members would like to see this society changed. Ultimately, these ideas and ideals were often expressed through various forms of community research and service that tried to make a substantive improvement in people's lives. Once again, these faculty views parallel those conveyed by students.

Some perceived downsides to Evergreen's approach also emerged from faculty members' participation experience stories. Among these is the view that there are some fundamental contradictions between the school's rhetorical ideals and its everyday realities. According to several faculty, one such contradiction is that while there is an ideal of learning as a collaborative community enterprise, it can wind up becoming more individualistic and self-centered than in conventional institutions of higher education. Here, too, some students' stories have related a similar point of view.

A second downside to participation is thought to be faculty fatigue. This, too, was attributed to the free, flexible culture facilitated by coordinated studies programs. In this view, fatigue is brought on in several ways. For one thing, the perception exists that there are risks attendant to teaching here that are greater than they would be at a conventional institution. The principle risk of this sort is viewed as being the fact that teaching is more public here. Because faculty are more visible to students and their program colleagues, they are under more scrutiny from both groups. In a twist of irony, this ongoing scrutiny can discourage members from trying to live up to the college's ideals, since they sense that someone at some time is likely to suggest that their behavior somehow falls short of the rhetorical goals.

The fast-paced, sometimes hectic nature of program life was also blamed for contributing to faculty feelings of fatigue. Unlike standard college classes in which activities reflect a more rigid, formulaic approach to learning, many of Evergreen's coordinated studies programs take a different tack. Though much curriculum planning occurs here as well, it is often done in a way that both facilitates and attempts to take advantage of spontaneous opportunities for learning that may emerge unexpectedly. While faculty believe this more flexible approach encourages serendipitous learning in a way that rigid planning and execution cannot, it is also perceived to have a downside. This is described as a pervasive feeling that one's work is never finished. As a consequence, life here feels unsettled to many people. Along with feeling unsettled, faculty also pinned their fatigue on being overstimulated by their programs' ever changing environments. In the final analysis, the downside to these kinds of experiences is that participants are often too tired to feel as creative as they would like when it comes to the challenge of designing new programs.

The joys and frustrations of teaching in Evergreen's culture frequently emerged as topics of conversation during my research. One faculty member successfully summarized what many expressed through the following metaphor: "There isn't anything that's really frozen up," he said. "The pot just goes on bubbling."

CHAPTER VI.

STORIES AND REFLECTIONS ON THE 4TH EXPERIENCE PHASES: SEPARATION & CONTINUATION

This chapter is devoted to an examination of the fourth experience phase communicated by Evergreen students in their stories and reflections. In addition, it offers an introductory sketch of what is not so much a distinct final experience phase for faculty, but rather an ongoing vacillation between two kinds of experience, that which stems from everyday participation in coordinated studies programs (as delineated in Chapter V) as well as a variety of continuing concerns that extend beyond any one program. These student and faculty phases differ markedly from preceding ones in some important respects. Those that came earlier showed a semantic equivalence between the discovery, initiation and participation experiences of both groups. Students and faculty alike generally expressed in their discovery stories enthusiasm for the school's approach, were sometimes critical of it in their initiation narratives, and frequently emphasized in their participation accounts how it had benefitted them. Throughout the first three experience phases, student and faculty stories also demonstrated that many of the same themes, symbols, concerns and everyday life patterns were to be found among both groups. These two organizational constituencies closely paralleled one another's experiences since both shared a common "here-and-now" reality: teaching and learning at Evergreen.

Following a prolonged period of participation in Evergreen's teaching and learning culture, however, student and faculty experiences become increasingly divergent in one important respect. Students graduate and pursue their life journey elsewhere. Most faculty, on the other hand, continue teaching at the college for a long time. This fundamental discrepancy predicates the different themes and concerns expressed in student and faculty stories that pertain to this time frame in their Evergreen experience. For students, separation is the theme that gives meaning and coherence to their pre-graduation activities and anxieties. In faculty accounts, on the other hand, the theme of continuation emerges from members' experience of teaching here over a number of years.

Along with these significant differences in student and faculty experience, there are also a few striking similarities. The most fundamental is that both groups view their post-participation experience with a certain amount of trepidation. The primary difference is that students' anxiety arises from their having to leave the college, whereas that of faculty members stems from staying on here. Since both the students and faculty feel anxious (albeit for different reasons), there is a certain amount of overlap between the themes and patterns of the two groups.

Due to the intricate experiential nature of this situation, separation and continuation stories are useful as evaluation tools. They afford a window into a socially and psychologically complex reality. Through this window may be viewed not only an important chunk of participants' Evergreen experience but also insight into distinctive characteristics of the college's teaching and learning culture.

Although accounts of both student and faculty experience during this transitional period are important to assessment work, this chapter favors students' separation themes. The reason for this is that gaining insight into students' learning in relation to their experience of Evergreen's culture is the primary goal of this investigation. To the extent that faculty accounts supported and enriched this goal, I have included them. At this juncture, however, faculty stories clearly depart from this theme. Therefore, although pursuing these tales to see where they lead is important, it would best be accomplished through a complementary study of faculty culture.

A. STUDENTS AND SEPARATION

As Evergreen students near graduation, they are likely to reflect on the nature and outcome of the non-traditional education they have received here. Though this introspection may take a variety of forms, I generally observed it transpiring through the medium of informal face-to-face storytelling. The underlying motivation for such narrating, evidently, is participants' anxiety about what it will mean to graduate and thus separate from the life they have known (and have frequently come to value) at the college.

For the most part, separation stories were told to me in two different contexts: natural and induced. Natural contexts included a host of spontaneous conversations which arose between students while I happened to be present. On other occasions, my interest in Evergreen and questions about it served as catalysts which led to storytelling on the topic of separating from the college.

At this point, I would like to move from the contexts in which these separation stories were told to the use that students make of them. The reason for this is that, more than anything else, I believe this is what distinguishes them from the accounts told during other experience phases. They function as informal attempts to answer what for many students is an important underlying question: did the educational curriculum I put together at Evergreen work well for me? Addressing this question often leads to asking two others. These are: 1) did I find my voice by participating in this nontraditional setting? and 2) is it a voice that is viable outside of Evergreen?

The experience stories that students formulate to address these existential questions can be categorized along a continuum of quality of experience. At one end of the continuum, students answered in the affirmative to all three of the above questions. At the other end of the scale, their usual response was a "No." As might be expected, there was also a middle ground which contained hybrid answers. These reflected mixed experiences and, as a result, qualified answers. These prominent categories of separation experience are presented below via the profiles of three students.

A positive outlook on separation:

The separation reflections of several seniors with whom I became acquainted may typify the positive end of the experience continuum. The positive outlook separation scenario

that I found is characterized by one principal factor: that after wrestling with the above three questions, students feel able to answer them in the affirmative. Three other factors also predominate. For one thing, they view their educational journey here as an experiment that will, in the near future, be successfully resolved. Second, they credit the culture of the college as having made it possible for them to find their voice. Finally, they believe Evergreen also helped them to figure out a way to turn their newfound voice into a viable livelihood. As a result, they tend to be enthusiastic and energetic.

Although this positive outlook scenario is representative of what I discovered from talking with more than a dozen seniors, the story of one person in particular will be sufficient for purposes of description. Amanda [pseudonym] clearly personifies this scenario. At first she was very satisfied with how well the educational curriculum that she put together for herself has worked. She credits the voice she found to her wholehearted, enthusiastic participation in Evergreen's academic culture. Finally, she feels certain that her newfound voice is viable outside of the college's distinctive teaching and learning environment. Her certainty stems from the fact that Evergreen also made it possible for her to do a couple of internships in her chosen prospective field. These gave her positive feedback on the efficacy of the curriculum she had negotiated for herself. They also gave her the opportunity to make adjustments in this curriculum before she left the supportive environment of the college.

While the above synopsis of Amanda's Evergreen experience is accurate so far as it goes, it is insufficient in one important respect. In order to fully understand and appreciate the depth of meaning Amanda derives from her participation at Evergreen as well as how this meaning has helped to ease her transition away from school and into the work world, we need to look at her portrayal of her positive experience. In other words, we need to consult her stories.

Amanda credits her positive outlook on separating from Evergreen to the deeply satisfying experience she has had here as a student. She portrays Evergreen's teaching and learning culture as the animating factor that facilitated both her personal and professional transformation. To illustrate the nature of her transformation, Amanda began the story of her personal journey by reflecting on what she had done before coming here. From her perspective, her tale is "kind of ironic." This is because her interests "came around full circle" while she was at Evergreen in a way that surprised her.

When I wrote my letter of application to Evergreen I was taking graphic arts at [my] high school. I was really excited about it. They had a whole print shop in a classroom. They had a darkroom camera for doing graphics work, a printing press, a plate making machine, and a typesetter. I studied all this stuff and just loved it. It was great. I was putting together the school newspaper and printing it. I was really excited about it. [But] when I came to Evergreen, they didn't have any kind of graphic arts program. It was all fine arts. So I got away from that focus [on graphic arts] for a long time.

The first experience she had which lured her away from her previous focus on graphics and publishing came from her core program. To paraphrase her description, it was a rich and stimulating tapestry of interdisciplinary information and ideas. In retrospect, Amanda views it as having been just the change of pace experience she needed to open her eyes to new aca-

ademic and career possibilities. In fact, it was so completely different from anything she had ever had that she became completely absorbed by it. How engaged she became and what it was that hooked her imagination emerges in the following account:

My first year core program was "Frames of Mind." It is a good example of interdisciplinary studies here. It was based on a theory of eight intelligences by Howard Gardner. We first studied psychology, neurology, sociology and anthropology, and from that context looked at this theory.

We examined each of [the eight intelligences he identified] by doing them. We had a logical segment where we studied problem-solving and things like that. [We had] an art segment where we made music and wrote compositions, danced, drew in the dark to music, laid on the floor and did Buddhist chants. There was also a hard-core academic psychology and neurology segment. So one day we would be lying on the floor doing chants and the next day we were dissecting sheep brains and going, 'Oh, so this is the medulla oblongata.' [By participating in these various learning activities] we were developing each of our eight intelligences.

By the end of the year we kind of dismissed the theory as not being very accurate. This was really a breakthrough for me. This is because in high school you get text books that have the 'truth.' You know, 'This is the way it is.' So it was so unusual to analyze this book [by Gardner] and be able to say 'I don't think [his idea] works.'

How students in the class arrived at this conclusion was equally novel and mind-expanding for Amanda:

We [came to this conclusion] by reading and doing a lot of anthropological work. We realized that if the brain is truly universal, then other cultures would do a lot of similar mental functions that we do. [But by reading], we discovered cultures that did not seem to have these similar functions. It was really hard to figure out. Did they not use this part of the brain because they weren't socialized to do so, or is the brain as we think of it not a universal thing? That was really hard to deal with.

In addition to stretching her previous conceptions of the world, this program also stretched her perceptions of herself and her familiars in a very personal way. "[This program] was really a mind blower as far as examining your deepest, darkest values. [For instance], we talked about how emotional experience helps create the character that you are, especially when you are a child."

Following her Core program experience, Amanda continued to take programs which looked as if they would open her up to new possibilities. In fact, she did this to such an extent that she lost any sense of focus. In her words, "I was kind of lost for a year." During our interview, I asked her how and when her focus started to come back. "Did a little voice go off in your head which said, 'Amanda, you have to graduate soon?'" To this she replied:

No, not really. It just kind of evolved. It more or less happened when I started doing my internship at the Information Services [office]. I'd been around there for years so I knew exactly what I wanted to learn in my internship. I split it half time between

[that] and a graphics [department]. So I ended up working with the Graphic Arts Department and also doing the writing and PR stuff. I was able to combine all this into a really cohesive internship.

At the same time, Amanda happened to take a program that, for the first time since she had come to Evergreen, helped her to touch base with her earlier interests.

I took [a program called] 'Mass Media' which had a communications/journalism focus. This is the one and only communications theory class here. After you take that class, there's nothing else to take. Either you have to create your own independent contract or take a program that has maybe one tiny segment of communications theory. Or you might take something that's completely different and change your area of concentration.

That's what I had to do. I took 'History and Literature in Urban Development' and 'Anthropology in Third World Cities' because there was nothing similar to communications at all that was being offered. So I was kind of lost for a year. Then, in 'A Tale of World Cities,' we had a research paper in which we could choose any topic. I chose 'The History of Advertising in America' [as my topic].

Even though she was not especially interested in the field of advertizing, she saw this program as an opportunity to once again hook up with something that she had previously found interesting. As she put it, this move "let me connect [back to] my previous year's research." It enabled her to reach back to her earlier experiences in order to combine things she liked to do (e.g, writing, photography and desktop publishing) with something she liked to think about: American culture. Beyond this, it allowed her to pursue this combination in a manner that was commensurate with her own value system.

It wasn't so much that I wanted to be in advertising. I think this area is very unethical really. But I was really fascinated [with] how it affects our culture, how it affects our desire for wanting things, how it fuels our economy, and how it's created this sort of popular, commercial art that has to do with advertising. Even fine photography is being used a lot in advertisements to make them look like they're art. The distinctions are blurred. In fact, it's gotten to the point where they [sometimes] don't even include the product in the advertisements anymore.

One thing that comes through very clearly in the above anecdote is the increasing depth of Amanda's interest in this topic. She is now excited about it. Her ideas are rich and well-developed. The connections she makes are engaging and well thought-out. Researching and writing about the history of advertising helped her to feel more focused. She felt as if she could finally see a unifying theme connecting the programs she had pursued here. "[This paper enabled me] to make a connection with my past studies. When I got back to studying communications theory again here it just resonated for me. It was like coming home after being away for awhile."

Although the logic underlying her Evergreen studies may have eluded her previously with the result that she felt unfocused and "lost", once she took this class, it slowly began to reveal itself. Explaining her point of view, Amanda said, "[My sense of direction did not

become apparent all at once]. Not at that point. [In fact, it was] not until I got back to doing graphic arts [in an independent study] that I really discovered how much I had missed it."

After making this discovery, Amanda "got back" to graphic arts in two ways. She negotiated an independent contract to study photography at Evergreen. Along with this, she worked out another internship which enabled her to pursue her interests in the artistic end of desktop publishing in a public relations capacity.

Because there just isn't any type of design program here, I was being trained by watching other graphic artists [in Photo Services]. [From this], I learned a lot of technical skills and a lot more about aesthetics. [Then] working with desktop publishing [in my second internship] gave me the freedom to be my own graphic designer. That's what I really enjoyed there. We had the opportunity to get kind of creative and do some wild stuff. [The people where I did my internship] loved it [and] it was fun.

Continuing with this train of thought, Amanda reflected on how investigating these two areas in this way had led to her finding her sense of direction.

Taking photography here [and doing my second internship] really opened up a lot of creative outlets. It was good to get away from the hyper-academic stuff and the hyper-vocational stuff, and do something that was artistic. [My sense of direction in this area] kind of all happened by chance.

Or, when looking at it from a larger, more comparative perspective, it happened by serendipity. This becomes clear when we examine a synopsis of her Evergreen experience. Amanda came to Evergreen with a pre-existing sense of direction. However, she put this aside when she discovered a host of new fields which engaged her imagination. After she had been here for a while, however, she realized that she had had enough new and varied experiences. At this point, she was able to come "around full circle" and reconnect with her original interest. But she did it in a new and imaginative way. Rather than just returning to something she had known because it was safe, she returned with a variety of new skills and experiences under her belt. She had used Evergreen to venture out intellectually, have a variety of stimulating and expanding experiences, rediscover an earlier passion, figure out that it was still a meaningful vehicle for her, and then fine-tune it by blending it with more recent discoveries.

It should be apparent that Amanda did not come to Evergreen with one idea of her future and then single-mindedly pursue it. She came with a sense of what she liked as well as a receptivity to where her Evergreen experience might lead her. Her strategy was to proceed according to a principle of serendipity. As she describes it, "I figured out what I liked." Continuously applying this principle to her educational experience enabled her to find and then pursue a satisfying and viable voice.

A conflicted outlook on separation:

In addition to seniors who had a positive outlook on their educational experience, I also came across a number of students whose reflections revealed a more mixed perspective.

Though they generally acknowledged having had meaningful learning experiences at the college (some of which may even have led to the discovery of a voice), they also recounted feeling stymied by some of what they encountered here. In these instances, participants' separation conflicts revolved around two factors. On the one hand, they viewed their educational experience here as positive because they had undergone a meaningful transformation and found a voice. Along with this positive experience, however, they also told of a more negative one. Some of these individuals felt stymied in their efforts to continue to pursue the voice they discovered at Evergreen as they prepared to graduate from the institution.

In their stories and reflections, these students characterized their separation experience as a kind of culture shock. They had worked hard, gotten encouraging feedback from their evaluations, and thought they were on the right track. As graduation drew near, however, and they began to seriously seek options for continuing their interdisciplinary approach to inquiry, they came up relatively empty-handed. So far as they had been able to determine, there were no clear niches for them in graduate school or in the work world. According to my informants, this discovery resulted first in shock and then gave rise to confusion and mixed feelings. Their educational experience, which they had originally perceived as being successful, all of a sudden was cast in doubt as they tried to transition to a life after Evergreen.

While the seniors I interviewed who had a conflicted outlook are all unique individuals, there are certain commonalities in their experiences here. These are best expressed through their stories and reflections. In order to present these in a coherent and holistic manner, I will focus on accounts that reveal the conflicted outlook of a single senior.

In many respects, the separation experience of Marilyn [pseudonym] is representative of others who also expressed a conflicted outlook. For one thing, she talks very enthusiastically about the three years she has spent at Evergreen, as do her peers. Over most of this time she recounts feeling stimulated, stretched and engaged in the passionate pursuit of her evolving interests. As a consequence, Marilyn credits the college with having helped her to learn in a way that is meaningful. By virtue of her experience of teaching and learning at Evergreen, she has come to a number of important discoveries about herself as well as about the nature of the world. In fact, these discoveries remain as exciting as ever to her even as graduation and subsequent uncertainty grows nearer.

Marilyn's only misgiving about her unconventional education stems from the fact that she is unclear about what to do next and where to do it. At Evergreen, she learned to follow a principle of serendipity with respect to what to learn, as well as how, when and where to learn it. In this way, she found what she thought was her voice and avidly pursued it. As graduation looms nearer, however, she feels as if she has just discovered something important that is missing from her education here. Instead of leaving here with a viable voice, she is emerging with what she perceives is an overwhelming problem. This has led her to question the outcome and value of the education she acquired here. Even though she is engaged by the nature of her problem, she feels a sense of loss over not having experienced a resolution in her educational pursuits here.

As I noted above, Marilyn's way of navigating through Evergreen was one in which she pursued her interdisciplinary interests according to a principle of serendipity. In her words,

this principle has worked in the following manner: "I've had this weird 'thing' pulling me in a certain direction, to understand. Every time I read something I think of it in terms of this thing that I need to understand."

Even though she has been "pulled" strongly in particular directions, and has responded to the tug, she admits that, "I don't know [exactly] what it [i.e. the thing doing the pulling] is. I don't have any words for it."

In spite of discovering that she may have a less adequate understanding of the way Evergreen's approach to learning works than she had thought, Marilyn still thinks that she has gotten a "good education." She characterizes it as having been "really personally driven." Describing how this works, she said,

[When] you want to know something, you'll go to any lengths to challenge what you know and how you know [it]. [When] I want to know something, I'll even challenge my own perception of the world in order to get a better understanding of what it is I want to know.

For her, this freedom to pursue what you want to know to the extent you may want to know it has been tremendously exciting and engaging. What has made it so gratifying? According to her the reward came in the form of a new way of seeing. As she puts it,

I could see connections. That's been the most exciting part about my whole education, it's been seeing the connections between a book and [another] book or connecting a book from one quarter to another [book] in a different quarter. I did that from the very moment I started at the school.

In fact, this sense of everything connecting together is at the heart of what she has gotten from her experience here. "If I was to term what Evergreen has meant to me it would be that I've been able to [see lots of connections]."

This principle of connectedness, of seeing how everything seems to interrelate, has informed how she has learned as well as what she has learned. In fact, the overlap between these two aspects of her learning is so intertwined that Marilyn has described the outcome as "a community of ideas."

The idea of community is also at the heart of how she thought she might apply what she has learned at Evergreen after graduating.

I thought that I could create this theory of community which could take me through the rest of my life and I could say I have this theory of community and I'm going to be able to give it to people and say, 'Here, look, you can make your own community this way.'

Despite her obvious enjoyment of what she has done at Evergreen and how she has done it, there is a downside to Marilyn's experience here which emerges as she narrates. Just as the college's lack of disciplinary majors and breadth requirements can be very freeing, since it facilitates an unusual degree of individual creativity and engagement, its lack of required

structure can also make a path of learning seem too ambiguous. As a result, it can be problematic for students. This is especially true as graduation nears. About this time, students may begin to feel that the work they set out to do here is not as finished as they had hoped it would be. When this realization hits, a questioning of the value of what they did as well as how they will apply it sometimes ensues.

For Marilyn this has indeed been the case. At the heart of her questioning lies the concern that she may have neglected to study something important in the course of her personally driven education. The result, she fears, may be that some vital connection is missing.

What I know connects to me. That's why I question whether it's worth anything. It's been so personal. That's why I ask, 'Have I really gotten an education?' I don't consider my learning to be [made up of] facts. That's why I asked, 'Do I have any knowledge?' Because I don't think I do. I mean, I can tell you names of people I'm interested in studying [and about] their ideas. I can tell you a little bit about the history of science. I can tell you a little about the philosophy of education. I can tell you things like that.

Continuing along this theme, Marilyn acknowledges other aspects of her feelings of intellectual inadequacy.

I don't know what [academic] disciplines mean. When I try to explain to people outside of Evergreen what I've studied I'll say, 'I've studied psychology, philosophy of this and this, some Russian.' But how does that all fit together? That's the biggest question. I'm trying to be able to explain it, my learning, without having to use those disciplines which my learning really doesn't fit into. 'Yes I've done some anthropology. Yes I've done ethnography as a part of social science. Yes I've learned personality theory, for whatever that's good for for me. Yes I've philosophized about all of that. I've been a philosopher of sociology.' [But] what is it good for? How do we use it?

What has made Marilyn's learning at Evergreen exciting and rewarding now seems to have become the source of her anxiety. From her perspective, "All my learning has been very conceptual and [now] I don't know what to do with it."

The reason Marilyn feels stymied and frustrated by what she views as the largely conceptual nature of her education stems from the fact that she also recognizes, due to her experience at Evergreen, a limitation of conceptualizing in general. Her view of this paradox follows:

Concepts are totally personal. [They are] affected by things that happen to you [individually] as a person, right? So if I understand perception and I understand that everybody perceives things differently, if I understand schema and world view and I understand the fact that we all grew up in different settings, [and so] we all have a different view of the world, [then] what do I do with that understanding? [All of] that's very conceptual. I can't say that I've learned about [a specific academic area like] medieval literature and how it affected history, or whatever.

Because Marilyn is dedicated to solving this epistemological problem, the feelings accompanying her anxiety only surfaced occasionally during the course of our interviews. She finds the experience of sorting out this problem to be "very scary." The reason for this is that she has not been able to find a way to move beyond the following questions: "How can I use this education [in more mainstream settings] and will it be valued? And if it won't be valued, what sort of communities do I put myself in where it will be valued?"

Overall, two separation themes were voiced by Marilyn. They can be characterized as follows: 1) anxiety over one's impending separation from the supportive, liberating culture of Evergreen, and 2) wondering how one can apply the personally driven learning that one did here outside of the college. As she saw it, these considerations led her to the next step.

I need to figure out what that thing was that I needed to [learn while I was here] and I also need to figure out what my position is in the world. Where is it important for me to be in society? What sort of path do I want to have? Do I want to be a responsible member of a community, and [if so] what community do I want to be a part of? Also, do I have any knowledge?

"I'm still not very clear about it," Marilyn acknowledges, with respect to figuring out the nature of the still-evolving voice she found at Evergreen. Even so, she appears to be undauntedly engaged in her questioning process, treating it as a personal research project.

I think I know how the different concepts fit together [but] I want to take all that a step further. I want to understand my [actual] learning process. I want to add this understanding I have about the world now [i.e. what she found at Evergreen] to my own learning process and come out with something that says what has influenced me to think the way I do, [as well as] how that can help me figure out where it is I want to go with it.

While she is trying to push for as much clarity and coherence regarding this puzzle as she can muster at the moment, Marilyn senses that continuing this intellectual adventure may lead to more time in school. Musing on this topic, she revealed, "What I want to do in graduate school is find the words for what it is I want to learn. But I need to identify that first. I don't have the language yet. That's really frustrating for me."

And, assuming that she figures out this epistemological puzzle in graduate school, what then? One idea that occurred to her in the course of one of our conversations is that she could try to create for others an educational system that encourages students to address the kind of issues she is now tackling. "I [could] create an educational system that focuses on individual learners, which is what Evergreen tries to do."

A negative outlook on separation:

The third perspective on separation I found among Evergreen seniors can be labeled a negative outlook. This scenario differs from the other two in one important respect. Whereas students in the previous categories were satisfied with their educational experience for as long as they were participating members in the Evergreen community, those in this sec-

tion were not. Participants whose reflections are predominantly negative tell of having mixed experiences on campus almost from the moment they arrived here. Among other things, they are critical of the interactions they were able to have with certain of their faculty. Some program content and practices, along with the truthfulness of institutional rhetoric are additional sore spots.

These seniors are disappointed at not having had a meaningful transformational experience during the time they have been at the college. As they see it, this outcome was not their intention nor was it the result of their actions. Instead, they view it as stemming from the false opportunities for finding an individual voice that were too often presented to them. These "rhetorical-but-not-real" opportunities frustrated and soured them on the process. Instead of persevering, they argue that they were defeated in their attempts by too many barriers. As a consequence, they largely gave up on the idea of being able to actually develop a meaningful voice at Evergreen.

From what I can tell, these students did not start out with a negative perspective. For example, one senior who now has a negative outlook, David [pseudonym], said he began here with a very different view of the school. "I [initially] felt very positive about the institution," he said. According to him, other students he knows similarly began with a positive view of the school. More recently, however, both his and his compatriots' images of the college seem to have shifted over time. "I think a lot of people who come to Evergreen initially have a very positive image [of the school]. They buy into what the college is about."

For David and a few other seniors I came to know, this rosy view of teaching and learning at Evergreen soon began to fade. The reason for this change in perspective was shared by my interviewees: they perceive that the institution's idealistic alternative rhetoric frequently did not jibe with reality as they experienced it. In fact, the longer they were here, the more apparent and frustrating the contradictions became. In retrospect, David notes that,

There is still a real traditional strain that runs through Evergreen, for all of its claimed and real alternative nature. On the one hand there is no shortage of people (faculty, staff and students even) who say that education is about inquiry, which is [your] process of learning, [your] process of being curious, of 'digging' what you are doing.

In spite of the rhetoric, however, the reality of this idealism never quite materialized for him. "There is always that [faculty] insistence on making a product. I think this is in many ways is antithetical to learning. [By doing this], learning acquires more of a product orientation. It becomes consistent with the factory model of education."

On what basis would someone lump Evergreen programs which are frequently described as being organic, student-sensitive and collaborative under a mechanistic assembly line model of education? Those who hold this view complain that this condition is brought about by an undue emphasis on evaluating what has been learned. As David sees it, "Programs tell people to stop doing their inquiry because they have to take [what they've learned] and make it into something which can be evaluated, [something] which can be graded."

Instead of emphasizing the importance of a finished product, David believes that it would be more in keeping with the school's stated value system to champion a more process-

oriented approach. To him, this suggests that, "What the institution should be saying [to students] instead [of the above] is, 'If you are curious about something, then we trust you.'"

As things stand now, according to those with a negative outlook, there are a number of contradictions in the way things are done with respect to the school's idealistic organizational rhetoric. These include the following:

If you say education should be student-centered and then it is almost entirely teacher-directed, that is a contradiction. If you say that an important part of our learning experience is community but then you do lots of things to prevent the coalition of students, then there is a contradiction that is too great to ignore. When you say that social change is an important part of the learning agenda, but you're not willing to acknowledge the dissonant voices in your own community, your own program, it says something different. If you say that interdisciplinary learning is going to happen and then instruction is done in a very compartmentalized way, there is another contradiction.

Along with his reflections, David offered a number of stories that express his view of Evergreen's contradictions in context. In this connection, several accounts follow that address on the perceived downside in student/faculty relations:

There was a writers' group that gathered once. A student came in late, and [the faculty member] simply ordered him out of the room rather forcefully. Another example is that, in order to get into this [same] program, it was necessary to produce an expression that you had done. I had a piece of writing, so I was sent to [a particular faculty member] to get approval. After he read it, his first comment was, 'Well, was English your first language?' Now, apart from that being blatantly racist, I think it was extremely disrespectful of my work. I'm not saying my work was perfect, but it was not a bad piece of writing. When you had a conference with [this faculty person], he would basically say, 'Your work is shit!'

##

This [writers'] group was dysfunctional. [This same faculty member] contributed widely to our dysfunctions. In our very first conference, he in effect told us we were garbage. He had us lay out our work. Mine was writing, so he had me begin to read it while he looked over the work of a photographer and a person who was doing sculpture. I read for three pages and he stopped me. He said that my writing was trite. He basically said the same thing about the photographer.

Now, the theme we were working on was eroticism. Since he said the photos were very cliched, and they were photos that the student had taken of herself, it was a double dose. She never finished anything after that [experience], and it was difficult for me to write as well.

##

At the conclusion of this program, I wrote in my evaluation that I felt like I was about to get out of prison. A combination of things made me feel that way. [For one thing], programs are not made simply by members of the faculty. They are also created by the students.

This contradiction was compounded by the fact that the program's title implicitly encouraged a community-oriented mindset. "[This program even had a name which] was meant to be collaborative. It was supposed to be collaborative and [encourage] work in small groups."

Because they felt stymied by such fundamental contradictions between program rhetoric and reality, the students were never able to create a cohesive small group culture. For example, "The small group I happened to get into simply didn't function very well. We lost one of the three members about half way through. She hadn't been contributing much to the group effort, not that any of us had been."

Further contributing to this troubled situation, from the students' point of view, was the fact that, "The faculty person was a problem. He was very much into the power of opposition."

Fueling the negative outlook held by David and some other interviewees is one dominant perception: that they have experienced more than one program whose culture was riddled with apparent contradictions between rhetoric and reality. The basic problem with this arrangement, as students have described it, is that it robs them of the power to define and pursue an educational agenda that is personally meaningful and therefore satisfying. In David's words, "One of the things that I object to about [this kind of dissatisfying learning situation is that] it's as if you've mortgaged your life to somebody else's agenda."

Continuing to pursue this train of thought, David mused that, "If learning is about inquiry, about intrinsic motivation, then programs where [this pattern] occurs are about the destruction of knowledge and not the creation of it."

What kind of "bad" program experiences might arouse such strong feelings on the part of a student? The answer to this question is when a program is perceived to have a culture that has been imposed rather than one that has been co-evolved. Such imposed program cultures exhibit a number of characteristics. Once again, a program experience described by David provides representative examples of some of these characteristics. "My program exemplifies a monoculture by its single way of doing business in the classroom, all the while talking about democracy and multiculturalism."

##

[The faculty in my present program subscribe to] a canon. The principles are dead center of the mainstream. There isn't even a question that there might be an alternative. Education [in my program] is not serendipitous. [For example], program evaluations came out once a quarter. At the end of the quarter, [the program coordinator] would send out a form to us. It was like a work sheet. It was a short answer form. One of

the things it did not ask for, even as an option, was the student's name. At the bottom of the sheet, there were two lines for comments.

At the end of the first evaluation, I wrote a narrative to go with the sheet. At the end of the second one, I [only] wrote a narrative to go with it. By the end of the third one, I just filled in certain areas of the work sheet.

##

One student in my program wrote a philosophy of education paper which she believed in, and was told that this is not what her philosophy should be. So she wrote a paper that did not reflect her belief, and that proved to be an acceptable piece of work.

##

At the beginning of this year, mailboxes were [made available] for the students in my program. Or it was said they were mailboxes. They had our names on them. However, at an institution where the president is called by his first name, a few of those boxes were identified by last names and some only had initials.

These mailboxes were actually stacking trays. In order to have space for students' names, the open part of the tray [was positioned so it] faced the wall. It was easy for the administrators to put things into these trays, but hard for students to get things out of them. [In other words], they were set up for people to put things in. It was set up for [the convenience of] the administration of the program. Clearly, the faculty and administration were not putting themselves in their students' shoes.

Prolonged exposure to culturally embedded contradictions between professed ideals and perceived reality were viewed by these individuals as having a negative effect on the quality of their educational experience. More specifically, they believed that these mixed messages had compromised their ability to develop problem-solving skills. Consequently, instead of developing an authentically critical consciousness, they felt pushed into accepting what David refers to as a "limited critical consciousness." As he describes it,

The college encourages what I consider to be 'limited critical consciousness.' This is as much a contradiction in terms as 'alternative institution.' They want people to buy into a certain amount of critical consciousness, but they don't want people to actually utilize it for examination of the institution. Those who do, I think, become disgruntled.

Of the seniors I met in the course of my research here, those who viewed a substantial part of their Evergreen educational experience as containing some fundamental contradictions were indeed disgruntled. They felt confused and stymied by their perception of the school's teaching and learning culture. On the one hand, they viewed it as encouraging them to find and pursue an idealistic vision of what they could do. On the other hand, however, they were perplexed when it seemed to erect obstacles that precluded them from actually realizing the personal visions which they found exciting. From their perspective, this phenomenon significantly diminished the sense of transformation they had hoped to experience from their Evergreen educations.

An example of how this downside separation scenario can lead to a negative outlook comes from my interviews with David.

Some of my program reading inspired me and led me onto other writers. It also led onto what question I was going to pursue in [an assigned independent research project in my program]. And [I expected that] my research [would be] very significant for me in this process.

Now, one could say, that having [been responsible for] assigning me that research, the institution did me a great service. However, the institution did not [really] support the research. The faculty originally said, 'OK, take a question that means something to you.' [They then said], "There are going to be check-in points and help along the way for you to do this work.'

But it didn't happen. They didn't support the students in the doing of their research. For example, one seminar leader [in the program] told some of her students that she did not put any stock in this research project at all. [She said] it didn't matter to her if they did this work or not, [even though] this project was very important to several students in the program.

After one or more frustrating experiences of this type, not only did some students become disgruntled by the time they were seniors, they also lost some of their enthusiasm and drive for finding and pursuing a voice. In fact, several of my interviewees who held a negative outlook acknowledged that they had found it increasingly hard to remain excited about learning at Evergreen under these circumstances. At the root of their cynicism is the perception that the supportive foundation they had expected to find here never materialized. Along with everything else, these participants also felt they had lost a certain amount of self-confidence due to all "the stuff" of this sort they had been through.

B. FACULTY AND CONTINUATION

Faculty continuation stories differ from those told by students in their fourth experience phase in a number of respects. Unlike seniors' separation stories, which are characterized by anxious retrospection and anticipation brought about by their impending graduation, continuation narratives do not focus on the nature and emotional impact of dramatic change. Instead, they highlight those faculty experiences which members perceive to be relatively constant over time. For the most part, these consist of a variety of enduring structures, relationships and qualities of experience.

Over the course of my interviews, I discovered an interesting pattern in faculty members' continuation stories. Generally speaking, these accounts highlight what can be thought of as ongoing gripes. Such complaints do not stem from a participants' teaching experience in any one program. Instead, they accumulate over a period of time. Typically, this seems to mean a number of years during which the same basic problem is perceived to have surfaced over and over again. Because of this, it is attributed to originate in the macroculture

of the college rather than from the way things are done in the microculture of any particular coordinated studies program.

The underlying reason for this phenomenon is not exactly clear. It may be that faculty are so ensconced in their own programs and so completely identify with them that they generally only become conscious of the larger culture of the school when it impinges on their consciousness. It is not unreasonable to suspect that this turn of events may occur only when something goes wrong.

Conversely, there is also another possible explanation. The 1990-91 academic year during which I conducted my fieldwork began with a bang: the president of the college was forced to resign because of a scandal. Underlying this final act was a long period of burgeoning dissatisfaction with the president's administration and, by extension, with the school's macro-culture. In order to focus on their teaching and not get too diverted by the politics that led to his resignation, it is possible that many faculty escaped by burying themselves in the exigencies of their programs. As a result, they may have evolved a way of coping that includes ignoring the macroculture as much as possible unless it negatively affects one's program experience.

Whatever the explanation, faculty members' continuation stories do tend to highlight their ongoing gripes about how things are done around here. As a consequence, images in these narratives convey the perception of a "dissatisfying gap" between what the storytellers would ideally like to see and what they have found or anticipate they will find over time.

Two interrelated themes are especially evident in these accounts. These are concerns over the lack of a clear and compelling faculty identity as well as the educational effectiveness of the institution. The stories which highlight these themes suggest that faculty perceive a significant gap in their continuation experience.

The continuation experience gap:
concerns over faculty identity and educational effectiveness

That faculty may metaphorically view their ongoing experience at Evergreen as containing something of a gap between their imagined ideal reality and their actual state of affairs is not just a recent development. Several members recounted oral historical stories which help to trace this "glass is half empty" viewpoint to at least a decade ago. One person, for instance, narrated about the kind of continuation experience gap (and the anxiety that resulted from it) which he found expressed by participants here in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In his words, the general climate of the school was chaotic. In spite of this, he believes people here also felt invigorated:

It was crazy in '79 and even in '81 when I came here. The school was under intense fire from the legislature. The legislature had been trying to shut the joint down. People here were, on the one hand, threatened by that, and, on the other hand, reveling in it because this gave them a clearly defined enemy (a 'they') out there.

The larger struggles with the established order were gratifying in a way because they gave members a sense of identity. When their vision was tested by this legislative crisis, they found they had a common cause (protecting the fledgling college) and, according to the story, could pursue it with enthusiasm as a community of potential victims.

At the same time, however, another kind of identity crisis was also taking place. Although faculty members' collective identity may have been clarified and reinforced by jousting with the critics of the school, some found dissatisfaction with other aspects of their Evergreen-based identity. The nature and extent of this perceived dissatisfaction are revealed as the narrative continues to unfold.

There was [also] a lot of self-doubt, particularly in '79. A lot of people were saying, 'I don't know whether we can make it as a school. I don't know whether the curriculum that we have started really does make sense.' I mean, there were a lot of faculty who were, I think, feeling some doubt about this beast that they had wrought. [Faculty] would ask, often in private conversations, or maybe a little bit publicly, 'Is it not clear that what we are doing is adding up?'

In addition to experiencing some doubt about the value of their new institution, faculty may also have had some doubts about how their own individual situations as teachers here were adding up.

This was a time, I think, when a lot of faculty members were comparing themselves to their colleagues from graduate school who had gone off to some other place (the jargon at Evergreen is "Brand X University" to teach. People were trying to measure themselves by a standard professional yardstick. Their colleagues had served on these horrid committees, and done this, and published those papers and so on. [These folks] were getting the standard kinds of professional recognition that in some sense weren't available to people here at Evergreen because of the new kind of curriculum.

This vague feeling among faculty that there may be something amiss with their collective and/or personal Evergreen-based identities is reflected in other ways as well. One, for instance, may be visible in the problems some faculty have with articulating a label for their own role here. This point of view is clearly articulated in one person's words. "I don't think there has been enough of a sense of what it means to be a faculty. We don't have a rich culture, a culture that has a rich identity [of what it means to be] a faculty here."

From what I have been able to ascertain, this situation has not always been the case. "Originally [faculty identity] was to be a co-learner. I think there are still implications [of this image of faculty] at Evergreen."

Now, however, this identity of co-learner is no longer seen as an integral part of what it means to be a faculty member at Evergreen. As a result, members are without a meaningful, unifying model. What is left, in the eyes of some, is a more conventional conception of what it means to be a faculty member. This, too, is perceived to have its problems. "[The word] faculty has a connotation of elitism or something. You almost have to apologize for using that term."

Another option that was mentioned by some is for participants to define and then carve out their own role here. The process of this individual identity construction is conveyed in the reflection that follows:

There is not a single model that says, 'When you come [to Evergreen] you've got to teach in the sciences or [represent your field].' There's no preconceived model, template or whatever. Ultimately, you've got to declare, or define, or present a package, whatever it is that you do within this place. You've got to identify yourself in some way. In some way you have to create that identity.

Trying to carve out a niche and, by extension, an identity for oneself as a faculty person at Evergreen can have a negative impact on members. The following comments point out the possible nature of this negative impact: "[Creating your own identity here is] a source of terrible pressure. It's the source of anxiety and tension and who know's what else. It's the nature of the beast."

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What I have observed here is that [people really experience] what I call an identity crisis. This place seems to make people come to grips with who they are. And they have to present themselves. If they don't then they are going to get chewed up.

As I noted at the outset of this chapter, the preceding section is an initial sketch of the faculty continuation experience phase. It is not meant to be an extensive analysis. Instead, its purpose is to point out the existence of this category of faculty experience and communicate a sense of its extent as well as its possible significance. The inclusion of these continuation experience accounts is intended to provoke questions more than it is to answer them. I believe that a thorough understanding of this phenomenon can best be served through a study that is focused on Evergreen faculty culture.

C. SEPARATION AND CONTINUATION SUMMARY

Two experience phases are described in this chapter. They are separation and continuation, respectively. The former highlights the anxiety students feel as they prepare to separate from Evergreen upon graduation. The latter, on the other hand, reflects the concerns that emerge over time for faculty as they continue to participate in the college's teaching and learning culture.

Of the two, the separation phase is more directly relevant to the present study of students' significant learning experiences and how these are supported or undermined by the college's culture. Interestingly, the relevance of this issue is not lost on the students themselves. That this is the case is indicated by a key concern expressed in their separation accounts: the quality of their participation experience.

The preponderance of separation experience stories that I was able to gather from seniors in their last quarters at Evergreen reflects a deep-seated need on their part to try to deal with the anxiety brought on by this major transition in their lives. The fact that the education students acquire here is, to an unusually large extent, a reflection of their own imagination, enterprise and self-attuning, may exacerbate the uneasiness that some feel at this juncture. Through their narrating, my interviewees attempted to engage in two kinds of sense-making which they deemed relevant to their transitional situation: retrospecting and prospecting. By reflecting on what they perceived to be defining and determining elements in their Evergreen educational experience (especially those aspects that occurred during their participation phase) these individuals were trying to come to terms with several questions. These include: What have I done here? How has it affected me? And, what might it enable me to do next?

What becomes apparent at this point in their student careers is that there is frequently not a clear answer to this set of questions. As a result, students adopt a perspective that helps them put the unknowns in focus. This enables them to downplay the ambiguity that stems from the transitional nature of their situation and gives them a greater sense of control over the uncertainties that loom in their future.

In the course of my research, I discovered that three separation perspectives (or "outlooks," as I refer to them in the body of this chapter) were especially prominent in students' narrating at this point. These are: a positive outlook on separation, a conflicted outlook on separation, and a negative outlook on separation. Each is distinguished by a unifying theme that contributes to a sense of personal identity.

In the positive outlook, for example, the narrator sees himself or herself as the coordinator of his or her own fate. This self-image is characterized by personal success which is attributed to hard work, self-reflection, organizational savvy and a supportive teaching and learning environment. The protagonist informally assesses his or her experience in Evergreen's culture as being the result of a "good fit" between individual needs and expectations, on the one hand, and opportunities that the organization was able to provide on the other hand.

In the negative outlook, experience is interpreted in a way that is almost the exact opposite of the above scenario. Here, for instance, the narrator portrays him or herself as a victim of circumstances beyond his or her control. At the heart of this self-image is a unifying theme: the quality of teaching and learning at Evergreen is, at best, seen as mixed. Too often, faculty are viewed as being insensitive, unsupportive, intimidating and, occasionally, even racist. While proponents of this perspective typically acknowledge that they have also had a few good learning experiences here, the supportive, liberating qualities of programs which gave rise to these positive experiences have been overshadowed by the debilitating impact of other programs whose cultures were more censorial in nature. The net result for these individuals is often disillusionment and disgruntlement. In their view, they came here to find a self because they were drawn to the school by its student-centered rhetoric. Instead, they repeatedly felt that the "carrot" of realizing a personal sense of transformation was always held just a little bit too far out of reach.

The third category of separation experience (what I have termed a conflicted outlook) falls somewhere between the previous two. In this scenario, students typically portrayed

themselves as feeling enthusiastic about the nature and quality of most of the learning experiences they have had over the course of their careers at Evergreen. So far, this self-portrait is reminiscent of the positive outlook. Now that they are trying to come to grips with their impending transition away from Evergreen, however, they find themselves questioning the long-term value of the education they have received here. The reason given for this is that they are surprised to discover that there may be no ready niches for them to go to. Employers are portrayed as favoring students whose educational affiliation makes them "known quantities." Prospective graduate schools are also perceived to be a scary unknown. The chief reason cited for this is that graduate institutions show signs of possibly being unwilling to view Greeners' more self-directed backgrounds as being as valid as more conventional majors. The upshot of all this is that students who express a conflicted outlook are suffering from a crisis of confidence. This extends not only to the confidence they have in themselves, but to the confidence they derive from their Evergreen educational experience.

In addition to students' separation phase, a second experience theme was introduced in this chapter: continuation. Unlike the former, this theme stems from a set of ongoing concerns expressed by faculty with respect to their continuing affiliation with the college. The principal difference between this theme and the others I have presented in this report is that continuation does not reflect a discreet phase that faculty typically pass through during their association with Evergreen. Instead, it is more appropriately conceived of as a set of faculty concerns that stem from their program participation as well as from their involvement in facets of the school's macroculture.

Two areas of faculty concern are especially prominent in members' continuation stories. These are issues of faculty identity and the college's educational effectiveness. A plausible explanation for this is that both of these concerns stem from a perceived lack of predictability, enduring structure in Evergreen's culture. Because the academic world is, in many respects, created anew every year, everyday life here may lead to an unsettled feeling. This seems to be exacerbated by the fact that faculty as a group have had few touchstones (e.g., rites of passage) in common with their colleagues in more conventional institutions. While this has at times contributed to a liberating sense of institutional freedom and flexibility, it has at other times facilitated a frustrating feelings of ambiguity and disconnectedness.

In conclusion, one overall message suggested by the findings in this chapter may be somewhat ironic for a community that is decidedly idealistic with regard to the quality of teaching and learning it tries to offer: leaving or staying are, in some respects, both problematic.

CHAPTER VII.

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW OF EVERGREEN CULTURE: OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Many of the student and faculty experiences described in the preceding chapters are distinctive if not unique to Evergreen. These experiences are the outcome of participation in different aspects of the institution's teaching and learning culture. Because of the amount of participation that it takes to have a distinctively Evergreen learning experience, it is unlikely that many students and faculty will be completely aware of the characteristics of the culture which make such experiences possible. These characteristics are most often taken for granted and therefore invisible to participants who have become grounded in the college's culture. Typically, it is those who are new to the college and its ways of doing and thinking about things who are most able to appreciate how nontraditional the settings, traditions and ways of doing things may be. On the other hand, new recruits generally do not have the time, inclination, training or the vantage point to systematically observe, reflect and report on what is distinctive about Evergreen. Studying the learning and teaching behavior of students and faculty as well as how they are affected by the traditions of the college is, however, what I was asked to do as an outside ethnographer.

One way I have done this is by gathering members' stories of their Evergreen-related teaching and learning experiences. These have been presented in the preceding five chapters.

A second way to study Evergreen's teaching and learning culture, as well as the impact it can have on those who participate in it, is through participant observation. This ethnographic data-gathering technique has been described as having two main purposes. According to one longtime ethnographer, the first purpose is "to observe the activities, people, and physical aspects of [a given cultural] situation," while the second is "to engage in activities appropriate to [this] situation" (Spradley, 1980 :54). The value of using this data-gathering approach in addition to collecting members' stories is that it may yield a richer understanding of what it means to be a "Greener." By including data gathered from both approaches, it is possible to study how participants view themselves and their experiences as well as how an outside researcher (who is himself a participant of sorts) sees things.

An important part of making sense of one's fieldwork experience as an ethnographer occurs in the writing up of the adventure. In addition to describing community members' experiences, the fieldworker's own story is also significant. Due to the nature of participant observation, the distinctions between subject and researcher necessarily become blurred. While this blurring may happen to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the degree to which the fieldworker becomes immersed in the host culture, it can affect the nature and richness of the data collected. In my own case, I sense that I discovered I fit quite comfortably into Evergreen culture patterns. Several of my contacts here have commented on this. One, for example, noted that I had "become quite a fixture around here."

In reflecting on my fieldwork experience at Evergreen, I realize that this comfortable fit has enabled me to slip back and forth between playing the role of observer and participant

with relative ease. One result of this is that I have been able to experience a number of the same settings and events from the vantage point of an observer as well as from that of a participant. Therefore, I have two observational data sets: that of others participating in the culture for one, and that of my own participation for the other.

In reviewing my fieldwork experiences, I was struck by how much overlap there is between these two sets of observations. I was also surprised at how playing these two sets of observations off against one another helped me to clarify some deep-seated patterns and themes. Because of these discoveries, I have elected to present my observations in a hybrid version of what has been called an "impressionist" style of ethnographic writing. There are several hallmarks of this ethnographic voice. For one thing, "the audience is asked to relive the [fieldwork] tale with the fieldworker" in order to be drawn into an "unfamiliar story world" and therefore come to "see, hear and feel as the fieldworker saw, heard and felt" (Van Maanen, 1988: 103). I am going to try to place you, the reader, in the fieldwork situation as I both observed it and participated in it. What follows now is a series of sketches of Evergreen settings and events which I observed to have a significant impact on others and, in many instances, on me as well. In other words, these cultural sketches treat of experiences that I perceive to be "especially notable and hence reportable" (Van Maanen, 1988: 102).

Woven in between the fieldwork stories, and in many cases stemming from them, are reflective meditations on a variety of cultural phenomena at Evergreen. These reflections are also part of the impressionist approach. As one student of this approach has noted, "There are in the telling of [fieldwork] tales many opportunities, of course, for the fieldworker/author to slip out of the story and make an analytical point or two [Van Maanen, 1988: 103]."

The outcome of this style of reporting is a metanarrative that purposely dissolves the sharp distinctions between the observer and the observed. Instead, it moves the reader back and forth between two or three different voices, those of observer, participant and analyst, in a somewhat seamless manner.

The symbolic landscape of Evergreen: themes and settings

A frequently mentioned characteristic that often stands out in the minds of those who see Evergreen for the first time is its lush, wooded setting. Unlike many campuses, the buildings do not overshadow the natural landscape. Most of the college grounds, in fact, are in a state of second growth forest. This gives the campus a quiet, rural, retreat-like quality. Contributing to this quality are lawns and meadows which serve as havens for outdoor individual study, informal small group meetings, and seminar discussions. On warm, sunny days, these grassy open spaces are heavily used. They provide members a chance to work and reflect in an inviting, relaxing, natural environment. Other areas of the campus which are used by members for environmental study, artistic inspiration and/or getting into a reflective frame of mind include the Organic Farm as well as a series of hiking trails that stretch through forest to a secluded beach on Eld Inlet. The farther one strays from Red Square (the central plaza of the campus), the more unmanaged, natural and ecologically diverse the landscape becomes.

The outside of the buildings around campus are perceived variously by different members of the Evergreen community. Some find them pleasant, others perceive them to be relatively unobtrusive, and still others view them as unappealing. One student, for instance, commented that she thought they would be greatly improved by having lots of murals painted across their facades. Despite the varying reviews they have received, there seems to have been an attempt on the part of the planners to create a series of structures that are loosely coordinated in design. This creates an impression of architectural harmony and complementarity without yielding a pervasive feeling of efficient but dull standardization.

On the inside, however, Evergreen's unique cultural stamp becomes more apparent. Here, for example, interiors reflect aspects of what insiders refer to as "The Evergreen Way." Two central themes are especially evident here: 1) a pleasant, inviting ambience, and 2) a penchant for self-expression. Both are expressed in a variety of ways. One way an inviting ambience is created, for instance, is via the many living-room settings that exist throughout buildings where classrooms are located. These generally consist of two or three chairs, a couch or two, and a table of some sort. Though not strictly separated from the general hubbub that occurs in these well-used buildings, the living-room areas are out of the main flow of traffic. Small groups of students (e.g., program editing groups, ad hoc seminar discussion groups, or project research teams) can often be seen in these spaces. A reason given for using these areas is that they provide quiet places which facilitate cohesive, face-to-face interaction among fellow seminar co-participants. The pervasive faculty custom of temporarily splitting up seminars into smaller groups which then retreat to inviting places overlaps with the second theme, that of self-expression. It does this insofar as the experience of splitting up and going off in a smaller group is intended to foster students' verbal self-expression.

The theme of self-expression is expressed in other ways as well. For one thing, the majority of classrooms are set up so participants can face one another during seminar meetings. This is accomplished by stringing tables together so as to form a square that can accommodate 20-25 people. That the majority of classrooms are organized in this way is significant. From what I can tell, it dramatically communicates and reinforces an image of teaching and learning at Evergreen that is commensurate with the college's rhetoric. Lecture halls, although they do exist on campus, are comparatively rare when compared to the number of rooms equipped for seminar. This, too, is symbolic.

Another interior display of self-expression is the vivid, longstanding mural in the central stairwell of the Library Building. Marked by vibrant colors and images, this painting extends over three flights of stairs. It was created by several artists in the 1970s under the direction of a visiting faculty member. He, some of his students and several people from the community worked together to paint the mural. In many ways, it is a monument that succinctly symbolizes a number of the themes I have found in Evergreen culture. In it can be discerned a kind of playfully ebullient expression of self and of community. There are references to Western forms of mythmaking (e.g., a quote attributed to William Blake) as well as to non-Western sources of myth (e.g., the text of a Maori myth). There are also depictions of uniquely personal symbols as well as personalized representations of traditional mythic images (e.g., the motif of a serpent consuming its tail). As it weaves around the walls of the stairwell, numerous images illustrate the idea and experience of transformation in a variety of guises. Fish transform into birds in one tableau. In another, a lone bird (the mythical Phoenix, perhaps) rises above the earth in a great plume of smoke.

More than being a decorative reminder of the artwork students did 20 years ago, I believe this mural plays a role in contemporary Evergreen culture. For one thing, it invites all who use this set of stairs to take in the distinctive, expressive aspects of the campus environment, experience it more deeply, become more aware of and attuned to their senses, and become more receptive to the creative and transformational processes that potentially exist around them. The mural invites community members to see and experience things in a heightened, even creative way. Thus, the experience of walking up or down the stairwell, something that members would normally take for granted, is enriched with respect to the amount of meaning they may derive from it.

There are also other traditions, complexes of traditions and ways of doing things that I have found around campus which encourage participants to make themselves more comfortable and feel more relaxed. These create an ambience that invites members to become more sensitive to and aware of their environment and, by extension, their own interests, needs and selfhood. Some examples to support this argument can be found in the Evergreen Library. Upon entering the library, for instance, one sees a setting that is very different from what one is likely to view in most academic libraries. The space in the entry way is comparatively small. It is accessible, aesthetic and welcoming, making it more likely that people will look forward to using it. Looking straight ahead, there is a lounge that has the feel of a living room. In it are couches, easy chairs, plants and a rug. Usually there are one or more people taking advantage of the area by sitting comfortably or lying down.

To the right of the entry is an attractive, diminutive art gallery. It features a rich array of color and design. The works displayed often concern issues of gender, culture, class, personal discovery and transformation.

To the left are computers. Since only three terminals are located here, they are neither imposing nor intimidating. Instead they are accessible for those in a hurry. Placing them here also puts them within a larger social and environmental framework. Rather than appearing to be a stark monument to high technology, the computers are kept in balance by an array of houseplants as well as the gallery's works of art. In fact, the only institutional artifact that attempts to censor patron behavior is the electronic gatekeeper.

Aside from this, the library entrance offers a variety of potentially gratifying experiences. Relaxing, indulging one's sense of aesthetics, or quickly seeking out pertinent information are among the options. These settings feel like an invitation to experience Evergreen's environment, and one's responses to that environment, more vividly.

This theme is perhaps nowhere more strikingly communicated than in the four living-room style lounges on the second floor of the library. As was the case at the entryway on the lower level, these are furnished with such homey touches as couches, easy chairs, coffee tables, table lamps and potted plants. Unlike their counterpart downstairs, however, three of these four lounge areas have large picture windows. These are flanked by curtains, another inviting touch. Through them dramatic views of the lush external environment are visible.

Many of the same behavior patterns that take place in the downstairs living room are also visible upstairs. While sitting and working here, I have often seen students responding

favorably to the inviting ambience of the library environment and, in small ways, they appear to be finding themselves in (or at least not losing themselves through) the doing of their work. Couches, for example, invite relaxed reading. One can stretch one's legs or lie down while studying. On occasion, students share a couch with a friend, thereby adding an enjoyable dimension to studying. I have seen students who were sharing a couch in this way take a break from their reading by exchanging back rubs and other kinds of brief, informal healing rituals. As is the case elsewhere around campus, the library living rooms, especially the ones upstairs because they are off the beaten track, provide an environment that is hospitable to celebrating and reinforcing a sense of community.

In addition to the library traditions I have described so far, there are several others which similarly contribute to the comfortable, inviting ambience of this setting. When practiced and experienced collectively, these traditions help to make the library one of the most attractive places to study on campus. As one student put it, the library is special because it is "a warm place to be." Not surprisingly, the practices that contribute to this warm, pleasant ambience are especially evident in the upstairs living-room areas. Here students can be seen sipping coffees and sodas, nibbling potato chips, and even occasionally eating lunch while reading or writing. Though I have spent over 100 hours observing others at work in the library and working there myself, I have never seen any trash left on tables from such snacking. In fact, munching of this sort seldom happens. This suggests that because students are given permission to snack, they themselves have learned to exercise self-control and act responsibly. That they do this suggests that they appreciate the opportunity given them to personalize their learning experience within the library, even in little ways, like snacking.

Being able to go outside and work on the library balconies is another tradition that gives students an opportunity to personalize their learning. As is the case with the other traditions, this opportunity is not advertised. There are no signs urging students to go outside. In fact, there are no signs even telling them that they may do this. Instead, there is one small unobtrusive sign on one of the two doors leading to a balcony. It simply requests, "If you take furniture outside, please bring it back in when you leave. Thank you." As might be imagined, this tradition of sitting on the balconies seems to be especially appreciated on sunny days.

Organizing principle #1: "adhocracy":

Along with the widespread themes I have described above, there are two patterns of support that are deeply embedded in the institution's culture. The first is an organizing principle that eschews the kind of rigidity that censors individual and collective creativity. Instead of only relying on conventional bureaucratic methods to organize their personal and interpersonal behavior on campus, members prefer a more flexible, nonregimented way of doing and thinking about things. Known as an "adhocracy" (Toffler, 1985), this approach to organizing differs greatly from that commonly employed by institutions of higher education. Unlike the prevalent bureaucratic model which requires participants to submit themselves to centralized authority in the way of specific status roles and detailed written procedures, the Evergreen version of an adhocracy is more decentralized. Because it grants more freedom to the individual, this organizing principle facilitates creative means of self-expression. Instead of being dispassionately enforced from the outside, the college's adhocratic way of doing

things requires individuals to constantly evaluate and be in control of their own behavior. To this end, Evergreen has long had a document known as the Social Contract. Rather than stating explicitly what actions people may and may not perform, it counsels sensitivity, mutual respect and the development of a collegial attitude. The final decision for how to act is, in a characteristically Evergreen way, given back to the individual for her/him to figure out.

This adhocratic way of doing and thinking about things is evident in a number of long-standing Evergreen traditions. On most weekdays during the school year, for example, certain areas immediately in front of as well as inside of the College Activities Building ("CAB" in Evergreen vernacular) are the site of a loosely coordinated bazaar. Here one can find craftsmen and purveyors of handicrafts. These include South American sweaters and other textile goods, T-shirts and other clothing that has been batiked or tie-dyed, handmade jewelry, mobiles, ceramic ware, herbal remedies, used books as well as secondhand items of a sort that might be found in a garage sale. Even a 1960 Rambler American with a "for sale" sign in it was parked outside the CAB in the area of this daily bazaar on one occasion. Clearly this event does not reflect much in the way of externally imposed control. It does, however, reveal many of the same adhocratic principles that animate other arenas in the college. For this reason it should come as no surprise that this event has the somewhat chaotic and exuberant quality of traditional market fairs that are situated in the centers of villages.

Another traditional event at the college which in some respects exhibits an adhocratic flair is the Academic Fair. Despite the fact that it is planned well ahead of time, this event also has a free-flowing, non-regimented quality. Dating back to a period when the college did not produce a catalog far in advance of students' arrival on campus at the beginning of an academic year, the Academic Fair was a way for students and faculty to meet, discuss, negotiate and collaboratively invent curriculum at the start of the Fall quarter. The organizational vision of an Evergreen education at that time was analogous to that of "stone soup." As this traditional story is told, the hungry residents in a village pooled their meager items of food into a common pot of boiling water. Having done this, they created a soup that was greater than the sum of its parts. In the version with which I am most familiar, the theme of the tale could be interpreted in the following way: "If everyone brings what little they may have as individuals into a communal setting and shares it unreservedly with others, everyone will benefit." Being admitted to the college during its early years meant that you were invited to come in the Fall and embark on such a collaborative, community-based educational adventure, an adventure that was thought to be as rich and exciting as the nature of one's contribution might make it. The initial rite of passage that marked the beginning of this adventure was coming to the Academic Fair to figure out how to do what you wanted to do and then finding others who either wanted or could be talked into doing it with you.

Today, a number of other longstanding forms and processes continue to exist and exert their influence on teaching and learning at Evergreen. In large measure, these fundamental animating characteristics of the college culture stem from adherence to an adhocratic organizing principle. For example, the basic teaching and learning units at the college are coordinated studies programs. Generally referred to in the vernacular simply as programs, these are briefly described in the catalog as being both "multidisciplinary and full time or nearly so." They function as loose, flexible organizational containers into which a variety of educational activities can be fit.

Lectures, seminars, workshops, student presentations, individual and group projects, field trips, retreats and potlucks are among the different venues of teaching and learning that may transpire within a given coordinated studies program. Though the names of these educational approaches may be found in other academic settings as well as at Evergreen, their enactment here reflects the college's distinctive way of doing and thinking about things. Lectures, for example, do not entail one professor running the show while several hundred students listen with greater or lesser interest. Instead, a lecture is usually an all-program affair. This means that approximately 60-100 students are in attendance. It also means that their respective three to five faculty seminar leaders are also present.

As in other areas of Evergreen culture, the fundamental organizing principle guiding a given lecture is that of an adhococracy. Faculty do a great deal of both individual and collegial preparation for these presentations. Instead of being rigid and tightly managed, however, they tend to possess a malleable, free-flowing quality. This is due to the fact that the social roles of faculty and students are not considered to be fixed and immutable. Faculty do not set themselves up as absolute authorities. They generally present themselves as knowledgeable within a given area and communicate their willingness to share that knowledge. In accord with this approach, many Evergreen faculty see their role more as that of resource persons and "co-learners" and less as managers of student knowledge or behavior.

In connection with this nontraditional philosophical stance, faculty encourage their students to step outside of the anonymous role that they have been taught to play in school settings throughout their lives. For instance, students are invited to actively participate in all phases of their education, including program lectures. Here they, as well as those faculty not actually presenting, can be seen contributing to and sometimes taking over the discourse begun by the person making a presentation. There are a number of ways in which this may occur. The most prevalent ones include asking questions, often without formally seeking permission by first raising their hands, disagreeing with the lecturer's assumptions, analyses or conclusions, and, on occasion, by taking over a lecture and turning it into an animated spontaneous seminar. Contrary to the way many outsiders might react to this behavior, it is frequently not perceived as threatening, offensive or disrespectful by insiders.

Most of the faculty with whom I have become acquainted are gratified to see students become so engaged and empowered that they take charge of their educational experience in this way. This was certainly the case in an upper-division program lecture that I observed. It took place in one of the few lecture halls on campus which contains tiered seating. On this particular day, one of the faculty in this program was in the process of lecturing on aspects of community development. Feeling inspired by how he had interpreted the assigned readings, a student contributed a comment to what she clearly conceived of as a potential conversation rather than a sacrosanct monologue. The faculty member displayed no offense, but rather engaged with the student in mutual conversation. After this interchange looked as if it was coming to an end, another student continued the discussion by jumping in with a related idea. Within minutes, participants in the room had excitedly switched modes. They shifted from being relatively passive listeners to becoming active in seminars. The discussion continued to move quickly from student to student around the small hall despite the fact that the tiered seating made seminarizing a rather uncomfortable endeavor. Instead of being able to face one another around a circle in the usual way, this seating arrangement forced people to crane their necks in order to participate. In any event, this spontaneous seminar did not

dissipate until everyone who wanted to express themselves had had an opportunity to do so. Even then, the faculty member did not immediately launch back into a predefined lecture. Instead, he paused momentarily and looked around the room. When nobody made a comment, he resumed his talk. Because his talk was not rigidly configured in the first place (e.g., neither read from notes nor presented in a memorized form) he resumed without seeming to worry about whether he had lost his place. Both he and his students were accomplished at improvising. In addition, both appeared to value the role that serendipity and spontaneity can play in learning and teaching.

Spontaneity and serendipity also emerge in program cultures in other ways. One program, for example, has developed a loose, flexible culture that seems to empower people by encouraging spontaneity and serendipity through the opportunity to personalize their learning in a way that members find especially meaningful. Because of this, students and faculty within it have evolved a set of traditions that symbolically communicate a strong sense of community. The impact of these traditions has been very positive for at least some members in the program. According to one third-year student, "Going into this program has been a tangibly different experience. People interrelate in tangibly different ways. And as I think about some of those things, there is a sense of community that is very important to the entire group, including the faculty."

In this program, Monday is the day in which different members (students and faculty) of the program have decided to bring treats of various sorts to share with others. It is not a formally coordinated activity by any means. People just bring things to share because they like to do it. According to the same student, these traditions include:

Somebody bringing flowers every Monday. Somebody else sets up a hot pot for tea or coffee. Another person donates tea, other people bring fresh breads, brownies, cookies and stuff for people to munch on. Somebody brought crackers and cheese with sliced salami one Monday.

Such spontaneous gestures both reflect and reinforce other ways in which the needs of individual members are supported by the group. For example, this program has an unusually flexible way of accommodating the interests of students. Some sign up for all of the scheduled lectures, seminars, field trips and retreats. Others may only sign up for the lectures, still others for the seminars. This flexible approach does not mean that participants can do as little work as they wish for the same amount of credit. In fact, it may mean just the opposite. Students are reported to be working especially hard because they have a greater amount of freedom to shape their own learning. Because of the program's flexibility, students have been able to design their independent projects to better meet their own intellectual interests and needs. In this way, a project can facilitate the making of important discoveries about oneself.

In comparison, other programs I have observed have a slightly more conventional institutional quality. What makes them appear this way is the fact that they are more rigidly structured and therefore often less amenable to individual student needs and interests. While this is not necessarily inherently negative in and of itself, it can be off-putting to students who idealistically believe in a utopian mythology concerning Evergreen and consequently have a romanticized image of the school. Depending on the openness and receptivity of the faculty,

this kind of predefined structuring may be perceived by the students to not take their interests into account. I have heard from several students, for instance, that they changed programs due to the fact that faculty seemed to be inflexible in their choice of readings, unbending in their deadlines for assignments, and undemocratic in their planning of how a program would evolve in the following quarter. Evergreen students with whom I have talked are clearly happiest when they feel they can influence the course of their own education, much as is implied by the college's promotional literature.

As suggested by an earlier account in which students "took over" a lecture and began to spontaneously seminar, the seminar format (whether planned in advance or occurring as a spontaneous group response) is an important part of many Evergreen coordinated studies programs. According to the catalog, seminars are "one of the central experiences of an Evergreen education." "The seminar is the heart of Evergreen," is the way The Evergreen Student Handbook describes this forum. It goes on to say that, "All work revolves around the seminar. It is the class."

Evergreen seminars, in my experience, are even more ad hoc and nonregimented than lectures. Though fitting into an overall program culture with some degree of harmony, each seminar also evolves its own unique character. This is because each faculty leader, in conjunction with 20 or so students, develops a unique interactional style, forms assumptions about working together as a group, and evolves ideas and strategies around how to best facilitate a successful, satisfying seminar experience. Each seminar develops its own subculture within a larger program culture. Some are very flexible, operate on the basis of consensus and give students many opportunities to shape their own education as they see fit to do so. Others are more predefined and shaped by the faculty.

The degree to which students may become engaged and actively participate in seminar groups varies widely as well. In the course of observing groups within a variety of programs, I have seen a range of seminar behavior. A seminar that works well inspires students to come to class prepared. They seem to learn how to critically read and reflect on their assigned materials in such a way that they can contribute to a meaningful seminar discussion. In class, they learn how to develop ideas out loud and not to refrain from participating until they have a well-formed idea. They learn to improvise from watching their faculty and from trying a variety of approaches only to have them succeed or fail. Over time, they gain self-confidence and begin to discover their own individual sense of who they are, what they believe, how to disagree with respect, and how to argue over an emotionally charged topic without attacking a fellow seminarian on a personal level. They slowly begin to discover an individual "voice" within a community.

Having observed seminars evolve in over a dozen programs during the course of an academic year, I have seen some amazing transformations take place. Students who were too timid to speak up in the Fall now join in seminar conversations with few reservations and refer to themselves as "gabs." Students who once felt "stupid" and inadequate in the face of their seminar fellows raise their feelings of self-esteem. Students who had difficulty doing things as a member of a learning community in-the-making have overcome their reticence and now move with comparative ease through group projects. Students who were intimidated at the beginning of the year by the idea of critically evaluating books written by experts now

effortlessly articulate what they perceive to be flaws in their assigned readings with a firm sense of personal conviction and authority.

In addition to coordinated studies programs and seminars, there are other more individualized educational formats on campus. These include group contracts, individual contracts and internships. Of these, the first two vary widely with respect to the kinds of learning and socializing activities that may occur. Since there are fewer people involved, an ad hoc principle is even more likely to be evident. Because of their comparative informality, a contract meeting can begin as a seminar, spontaneously switch to a lecture format, return to that of a seminar and then end up as a potluck! The fact that there are fewer people involved gives this format the greatest amount of flexibility and spontaneity. As a result, these formats can better accommodate specialized student and faculty needs and emergent interests than those that are more formalized, highly planned and heavily enrolled.

Unlike the other teaching and learning formats open to Evergreen students, internships are intended to take them off campus for a different kind of educational experience. Whereas the others are typically grounded in some form of theory or nonmainstream academic experience, internships enable students to explore work options that are often more conventional than what they have done on campus. Internships serve as a means for students to move away from the world of school and move closer to a world of work that interests them.

Along with the academic settings and ways of doing things I have been focusing on, there are other more general campus traditions as well. One that is pervasive and almost always taken for granted is a phenomenon that insiders refer to as "Evergreen time." This, too, reflects the ad hoc organizing model. I have seen people move to its rhythms in many settings around campus. Evergreen time is typically 10-15 minutes past the stated time that a meeting or gathering is supposed to start. During my observations, for example, I have yet to see a program lecture or seminar start according to bureaucratic time, that is on the hour. Like many other aspects of the college's culture, time is not solely managed in a top-down manner. In fact, it is frequently arrived at informally and consensually by participants at the grassroots level. Because of this, time begins when members of a group deem themselves ready to begin. In one upper-division seminar I observed, for instance, students and faculty began to filter into the classroom approximately on the hour. Then a period of informal "schmoozing" (Schrank, 1978) occurred for about ten minutes. At this point, a student spoke up. "I have an announcement," she said. This was followed by several more announcements and discussions of announcements by members of the seminar. After another ten minutes, there was a pause. At this juncture, the faculty seminar leader looked around the room, sensed that all the announcements were finished, and then initiated the formal part of the meeting by asking if anyone had a "lead-in question" about the readings. This way of treating time differs considerably from the more mainstream institutional model in which a professor enters the classroom and immediately launches into what he/she conceives of as the real business of the class meeting.

Organizing principle # 2: Refounding

Along with an underlying ad hoc way of doing many things on campus, there is a second organizing principle that is often displayed in participants' behavior. I call this the

refounding principle. The name stems from the fact that this mode of organizing originally surfaced during the founding of the institution. In addition to having been employed by the founders, it is often reenacted by students, staff and faculty who were not present during the 1970-71 founding year. As the founders did it, it consisted of questioning all of the then-prevalent conventional wisdom concerning higher education, organizational design and human relations. After collectively identifying what they did not want (e.g., departments, grades, tenure, etc.), they then set about reinventing the wheel, so to speak. This process of consciously putting all assumptions up for grabs, weighing their relative merits, and then proceeding in a way that feels right to participants is a traditional pattern that is frequently enacted by college members at the onset of a new social grouping. For example, this year a group of students who had not previously worked together as a group showed up for the first 1991 graduation planning meeting. In short order, participants were tossing out their assumptions, values, and issues to the group in the belief that clarification of individual concerns and needs was the first step to creating a viable committee. One student, for instance, proclaimed that she believed in the need to make decisions by consensus. Another countered that this approach concerned him because it did not seem practical given the number of people who wanted to be involved (about 30) as well as the number who evidently did not want to be involved (all of the prospective graduates who did not show up). After a while, discussion turned to such matters as deciding on speakers and the after-graduation party. Here again, all potential assumptions were questioned. Did we want a number of faculty speaking, or one, or none? Did we want some combination of insiders and well-known outsiders speaking? Could we afford the outsiders we might be interested in? Did we want a "tacky Kool-Aid fountain" or not? Would we prefer to just have one or more speakers or just have the party? Over the course of the two-hour meeting, about the only assumption I did not hear questioned was whether or not students should graduate.

Individual coordinated studies programs as well as the seminars within these programs often go through a similar soul-searching process when they first begin to meet. Here, however, what is held up for question differs in some respects from that which is discussed in a more peripheral group like the graduation committee. Topics that are debated include how to get a seminar discussion going, how to keep it going, how to encourage shy members to talk and how to urge vocal participants to tone down their desire to talk so much. One program seminar, for instance, tried several different ways of controlling the flow of conversation. There was no one format that was adhered to. People either spoke up or not as they wished. After several meetings, students and faculty seminar leader alike broached a discussion about how to facilitate the shy folks speaking up in class while simultaneously encouraging the already vociferous members to ease up on their talking. It was decided that the faculty member would play traffic cop. This did not prove very workable. The verbal people resented it, the shy folks still did not talk, and the faculty member felt put upon by having to act against his values as an authority figure. The next seminar principle they hit upon was to try to let the class conversation follow a relatively natural progression around the room, to agree to be sensitive to others' desire to speak when the mood struck them to do so. On top of this, any shy person was accorded special consideration should he or she be moved to speak. These vague ground rules actually worked relatively well, apparently because the group discovered that adhering to principles of sensitivity and mutual respect fostered a conversational "flow" better than fixed rules or procedures that could not allow for the continually changing dynamics of a discussion.

Getting-started discussions in other programs similarly led to trying out different practices in search of organizing routines that would encourage participation by empowering individual members. Several of the seminars I have observed, for example, worked out specific ways to start off their meetings with one or more routine practices that felt good to participants. Some wound up beginning by agreeing to have the faculty seminar leader toss out a lead-in question, "What did you think of the book?" or even "How did you feel about the book?" Others adopted the practice of encouraging students to come into the seminar room and, on their own inclination, walk up to the blackboard to list the questions, interests or other issues that struck them during their readings.

The fact that such groups continue to go through a microcosmic founding process of their own in the first place (and the fact that they continue to engage in the identification and questioning of deep-seated assumptions in order to figure out a way to do things that serves the specific participants in the groups) suggests that the refounding principle is a central animating characteristic of Evergreen culture. It also suggests that the invention of small-group cultures which serve their participants is a strong value at the college.

This concern with the well-being and quality of experience of others is evident in other arenas around the college as well. In the Evans Library, for instance, it is visible in the way reference librarians deal with patrons. The symbolic aspects of this social interaction both reflect and reinforce the themes, patterns and organizing principles communicated in other aspects of the institution's expressive culture. Like them, this interactional routine is supportive and nurturing. The specific behavioral components of this routine reflect an acceptance of individual learning styles as well as an understanding that users possess differing levels of research sophistication. Because this interactional routine communicates an accepting and empathetic attitude, asking for reference assistance does not come across to the library user as a "putdown." Instead, it reflects an awareness of and an empathy for the patron's instrumental needs as well as the quality of their learning experience. Judging from the participants' verbal and facial expressions, it can even be enjoyable.

The actual form that this user/reference librarian social interaction typically takes is as follows. A patron approaches the Reference Desk. His/her presence is quickly acknowledged by the librarian, either verbally or with a visual cue. So long as he/she is not already in the midst of helping someone else, the librarian immediately gives this new patron attention. He/she is enjoined in a dialogue that is intended to draw out the nature of his/her problem. Usually the reference librarian quickly names a work that is thought to meet the user's need. Instead of just giving the client a call number or pointing him/her in the general direction of the reference work, however, the reference librarian often accompanies the individual to the location of the work. Having done this, the librarian may then extract the work, and explain and demonstrate how to use it to best advantage. After sticking around long enough to make sure the user understands how to proceed and is reasonably comfortable with the research task ahead, the librarian then returns to the Reference Desk.

In my observations, this interactional routine enables an Evergreen librarian to do more than simply dispense technical reference advice. It allows him/her to pay attention to both the patron's stated instrumental needs (e.g., "I am looking for something on --") and unstated emotional concerns (e.g., "Libraries intimidate me and make me feel inadequate"). By adopt-

ing this supportive way of doing things, librarians and other library staff enhance the quality of users' library experience.

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

The foregoing has been a sketch of my observations and reflections concerning a variety of richly symbolic traditions and patterns at Evergreen. My method has been to highlight selected settings and interactional patterns which I believe evocatively express deeply embedded cultural themes and organizing principles that are of interest and value to insiders. These include the following: a number of supportive traditions and ways of doing things (e.g., being able to personalize one's experience in the library, creating a sense of community in programs, and making programs work well for participants); several broad, recurring cultural themes (e.g., a penchant for self-expression and the creation of an inviting ambience), and a couple of deep-seated patterns (e.g., ad hoc organizing principle and refounding principle).

CHAPTER VIII. EPILOGUE:
TEACHING AND LEARNING AT EVERGREEN:
A DISCUSSION OF PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

At the beginning of this report, several questions loomed large. Two of these stemmed from a preliminary content analysis I performed on some admissions publications and assessment documents in order to gain a sense of how insiders present themselves formally in the medium of print. These are as follows:

- 1) Are the images of teaching and learning described in the school's in-house literature reflective of campus reality as students and faculty experience it on a daily basis? [Chapter I, p. 3]
- 2) Or is this view of an Evergreen education an expression of a timeworn institutional mythology that is out of touch with what students and faculty are doing, thinking and feeling? [Chapter I, p. 3]

Another area of inquiry was suggested by a research concern which insiders had articulated in their ongoing assessment work. I have taken the liberty of slightly altering the phrasing of this concern in order to present it as a question.

- 3) How [does] the culture we create at Evergreen support or undermine our six [teaching and learning] goals? [Assessment Study Group memo no. 2, p. 1]

The last question comes from a belief that insiders stated in a recent assessment report. I have borrowed their statement and turned it into a question because it gets to the heart of a persistent insider concern: the distinctiveness of the college.

- 4) In what ways does "Evergreen [have] something special going for it in the higher education process?" [Assessment Study Group memo no. 2, p. 1]

As I respond to these questions in the following pages, I will confine the discussion of my findings to students' experiences of Evergreen's culture, since that has always been the focus of this study. As I have demonstrated repeatedly throughout the report, however, the experiences of Evergreen faculty generally parallel those of students.

I will begin the discussion by addressing the first two questions. Because they are more ethnographic in nature, these questions are closer to the data and are therefore more easily answered. My response to both is a qualified "yes." The reason for this is that I found teaching and learning at Evergreen to both reflect and not reflect the images presented in the campus literature I surveyed.

First, with regard to question one, I found that Evergreen's educational approach really does, for the most part, mirror the predominantly upside image that insiders have committed to print. Drawing on a metaphor used by insiders to characterize Evergreen's culture, I did find a kind of "electricity" that "pulses through" many aspects of everyday life here. With

regard to teaching and learning, for example, it is especially noticeable in some coordinated studies programs. There it is visible in the excitement, enthusiasm and commitment I have seen participants express for their academic pursuits. It is also apparent in members' appreciation of the intellectual stimulation, active involvement and sense of community that they say they frequently derive from interacting with their fellow participants in such diverse learning activities as seminar discussions, independent research projects, field trips, program retreats and potlucks.

One reason that this electric quality ripples throughout the teaching and learning arena as much as it does, I believe, is that the college generally tries to be "creative in everything it does." To a great extent, creative approaches to teaching and learning permeate the culture. They are evident in the ongoing macroculture of the organization. The library, for example, has evolved a number of creative ways of making the facility a more rewarding experience. These range from informal traditions that encourage library users to feel more at home while they are reading to supportive interactional routines between librarians and patrons that make reference work seem less intimidating.

Creative approaches to teaching and learning are also apparent in the microcultures that emerge in particular coordinated studies programs. In this arena, for instance, a program culture begins to take shape through the collaborative design by faculty of a basic, flexible framework. Over time, many characteristics that are critical to the success of such a program are co-evolved by students and faculty as the need arises. These include a variety of practices, interactional routines and ways of doing things that support the kind and quality of teaching and learning that meet the emerging needs of the students and faculty who are participating in this particular learning community. Some typical grassroots traditions that evolve in seminars, for example, include ways of starting a discussion, ways of making sure everyone feels comfortable enough to participate in a discussion and ways of resolving conflicting ideas of how a program should proceed.

Individual displays of creativity in program settings are also stimulated by this kind of flexible, supportive program culture. Over the course of my research, I saw this phenomenon take several forms. In one case, for instance, a couple of students and their seminar leader agreed to collaborate on the writing of an article for a popular magazine. This venture was an extension of an interest which they discovered they shared in a program setting. Another case involved students in a program spontaneously beginning to seminar in the Lecture Hall building when a presentation by a program faculty member touched on an abiding interest that was widely shared. These examples confirm another aspect of the flexible and supportive image asserted by a colorful 1990-91 admissions brochure. "What Evergreen is, is you," it states. "First, last and foremost, we're interested in you the student."

This brings us to the second question I posed at the beginning of the report. It asks if the positive, celebratory image of Evergreen culture is indeed reflective of everyday reality as participants know it. In fact, it inquires into whether the upside image might not be an expression of a timeworn institutional mythology that is out of touch with participants' contemporary experience. This somewhat more cynical interpretation of teaching and learning also appeared in my observations and participants' Evergreen experience stories. Typically, students saw a downside to their program experience when they felt that certain aspects of its culture did not meet their needs in some fundamental way. Just as some programs' prac-

tices, interactional routines and ways of doing things were interpreted by students as supporting their individual learning agendas, other programs' traditions were perceived to undermine their pursuit of an animating passion. In most of the negative cases I investigated, the undermining was facilitated by program practices and routines which students viewed as censoring their inclinations to pursue particular learning paths. From the students' point of view, these censorial traditions were imposed on them by faculty who were oblivious to their individual needs for support.

I also found a second kind of censorial tradition in a few programs. In students' views, this stemmed from a faculty violation of what they had believed was an article of trust between students and instructors. This assumption (fostered by the school's promotional literature and by word of mouth) was that learners and teachers would be functional co-participants in their coordinated studies programs, rather than being consigned to more conventional hierarchical roles. These students had expected that they would be given the opportunity to contribute to the direction and development of their program in some meaningful way. Should this program co-creation scenario that students anticipated not transpire, they often became disgruntled. To them, this lack signified a limiting of the level of active, student-centered learning they might experience. Clearly, censorial traditions of this sort run counter to the official upside image that dominates the printed page in such publications as the college catalog and student handbook.

My attempts to address this second question also led me to discover another censorial practice that can be particularly detrimental to the learning experiences of students of color. Of the one dozen Asian/American, African/American and Hispanic/American students with whom I developed an ongoing fieldwork relationship (and, in some cases, a friendship) over the period of a year, all but two reported experiencing facets of this same basic downside scenario. It was especially prevalent in the experience stories of participants who found themselves to be the only non-white person in a seminar. Because the school's curricular emphasis on multicultural studies precedes the reality of a culturally representative student body, these individuals felt that they were often looked to for "expert" input on issues related to diversity. The problem, as they saw it, was that this was the case even when their cultural background was not the one under discussion. While they perceived that the interest of their white compatriots was generally sincere, most of the students of color whom I interviewed felt it was also often inappropriate and sometimes insulting. In fact, most of the individuals who found themselves in this position indicated that they were uncomfortable being thrust into the role of ethnicity expert without a prior understanding that this would occur. My interviewees stressed that they felt unable and unwilling to play a part which one participant referred to as "the professional person of color."

The reason I have referred to this phenomenon as a censorial practice is because, in its present form, it interferes with the teaching and learning experience of students of color. Instead of encouraging them to concentrate on identifying their interests and then pursuing these with a view to developing a self-confident sense of their own voice, my interviewees emphasized that the practice of assuming they are experts on multiculturalism by virtue of their not being white can actually impede the learning agendas they have set for themselves. In other words, instead of allowing students of color to concentrate wholeheartedly on their studies as other students are able to do on campus, this practice, in their view, signifies that white people believe they have a more pressing obligation: to raise whites' multicultural con-

sciousness. In the final analysis, what many white members view as the expression of a genuine desire to learn about people of color from people of color may be interpreted differently by people of color, or at least by those with whom I spoke. To these individuals, such a practice is one more example of a symbolic put-down. They see it as one more attempt by white people to place their own priorities above those of other peoples'.

In addition to these subtle, racially motivated censorial traditions, my interviewees also recounted examples of more blatant expressions of prejudice. In one prevalent downside scenario, for instance, the performance of a student of color is criticized by a white faculty member who is perceived as linking the supposed deficiency to the student's ethnic background. One example of this archetypal experience was said to have occurred in a writing group on campus. According to the narrator, he was asked by a faculty person to audition a poem he had written as a requirement for admission to this particular writing group. The student had barely begun when the instructor, evidently critical of the piece, asked him if English was his first language in what seemed to be a deprecating tone.

A second example of an act that was perceived to have been a racially motivated put-down directed at a student of color came from a former Evergreen student. At one point in his student career here, he recalled, a white faculty member had discouraged him from pursuing a path in photography which the aspiring photographer had found exciting. For a long time, the student said that he believed this advice to be valid. Though disappointed, he attributed the counsel to the fact that he did lack the necessary skills to successfully pull off what he had been attempting to do. After feeling bad about his perceived deficiency for some time, however, he began to see the situation in a different light. Eventually, he came to suspect the teacher had discouraged him because the approach he was pursuing clashed with the faculty member's narrow, culture-bound sense of aesthetics.

According to the above experience stories, two disturbing downside scenarios are experienced by students of color. In both, white faculty were perceived to have symbolically communicated a message that runs counter to the school's official image. Clearly, these kinds of stories do not reinforce the image that Evergreen is "a learning community whose doors are wide open to a diversity of cultures, ages, backgrounds and ideas." In fact, based on the themes in these accounts, it is not difficult to imagine why the students of color who shared their stories with me were not among the most staunch advocates of Evergreen's official upside image.

Now I would like to progress on to the third question posed at the beginning of this epilogue. This is: "How [does] the culture we create at Evergreen support or undermine our six [teaching and learning] goals?" (Assessment Study Group memo no. 2, p. 1). In order to respond to this question, we must begin with another: what are these six teaching and learning goals? I have seen them articulated in at least three different ways in the college's assessment literature, including Study Group memos and a recent college self-study, Constancy and Change. For ethnographic purposes, they can be conceptualized as a set of distinctive themes and patterns that insiders believe are present in the school's teaching and learning culture. I understand them to include the following:

- an interdisciplinary approach that is apparent in the designing, implementing and experiencing of curricula in coordinated studies programs and other teaching and learning arenas
- the creation of collaborative working relationships among students and faculty, as well as between members of both groups
- a focus on developing critical reasoning skills through forms of active rather than passive participation
- a concerted attempt to link theory with practice in all areas
- a curriculum that stresses and celebrates both cultural and other forms of diversity as a resource
- academic skill building

During the year I spent as a participant/observer on campus, I found that these goals were apparent in many facets of Evergreen's teaching and learning culture. The writing of narrative evaluations by both students and faculty, for example, shapes the experience of those who are involved in it. Among other things, it forces them to interrelate the teaching and learning that has taken place. The extent to which participants write their narrative evaluations with future employers in mind reflects one way in which theory and practice may be bridged. The fact that the writing of these evaluation statements is done on computers, thanks to a program which has been installed on campus terminals for this purpose, is an instance of building skills like writing as well as word processing.

Active forms of critical reasoning are also being exercised through the narrative evaluation ritual. This is true on two levels: first, with the planning and writing of the evaluation documents, and then during the evaluation conference when a student and faculty member meet to discuss, and possibly to negotiate, the written narrative. Also evident, is the fact that this quarterly tradition both reflects and reinforces a collaborative process that is intended to facilitate an unusual level of understanding between both participants.

The educational goal of diversity may also be facilitated by the school's evaluation ritual. While the writing and discussing of narrative evaluations may not always serve as an occasion to experience certain forms of cultural diversity (e.g., ethnic or racial), it will usually involve the bridging of some sort of difference (e.g., that of age, gender, personality or even of belief systems). In any case, Evergreen's approach to evaluation always requires active participation, critical reasoning, self-reflection, self-expression and face-to-face interaction that is not facilitated by standard systems of grading used in most institutions.

In my experience, other milieux on campus are also likely to support these six teaching and learning goals. Most of the coordinated studies program seminars that I have observed, for instance, teach students a variety of lessons beyond those contained in readings and lectures. For one thing, they demonstrate the importance of establishing viable collaborative working relationships with one another. This goal is clearly facilitated by a number of practices and ways of doing things which permeate Evergreen's culture. A seminar typically con-

sists of approximately 20 people. They gather around a rectangular arrangement of tables in a room that is expressly designed for meetings of this size. Obviously, this arrangement is conducive to active forms of face-to-face interaction. Further supporting this educational process is the practice of everyone being on a first-name basis. I found these traditions in the seminars of the 20 coordinated studies programs I investigated.

In addition to facilitating collaborative forms of working together, seminar traditions also tend to foster other kinds of active participation among members. Some of these support certain critical reasoning skills. Examples of this include: learning to participate in a group without having to dominate it or be dominated by it, learning to develop and articulate one's own point of view logically and clearly, and learning to persuade others to consider a particular point of view.

Due to the multicultural reading materials assigned in many seminars, issues of diversity are also likely to emerge in class discussions. Active discussion of these issues may help members discover and grapple with their own ignorance, prejudice and insecurities with respect to people who differ from them in any of a number of respects. This is true on both an intellectual and, perhaps more importantly, an emotional and experiential level.

The linking of theory with practice is also apparent in seminar settings. Probably one of the most obvious and widespread linkages of this sort that occurs is the realization by one or more students of how perspectives stemming from different intellectual traditions may connect in a number of ways. Another kind of connection that I have frequently witnessed is one in which a student suddenly sees a correspondence between an event celebrated in a work of fiction, for instance, and one that has occurred in his or her own life.

A seminar can facilitate interdisciplinary learning experiences in a variety of ways as well. Dialogues of the sort mentioned above, for example, can be encouraged by faculty seminar leaders through breaking a seminar into small discussion groups, and then asking the members in each group to discuss a given topic in whatever way they choose. Even more frequently, however, I have seen seminar discussions that are characterized by interdisciplinary thinking begin spontaneously. On their own prompting, participants in these instances may display a desire to examine a topic from a number of different perspectives. Sometimes these perspectives are representative of a particular discipline; at other times they reflect a synthesis concocted by the participants themselves.

Using the seminar format as an example again, I would like to address the second part of question number three: how Evergreen's culture might undermine the six teaching and learning goals. The answer to this is that any practice or routine that somehow censors or stymies the quality and/or quantity of learning that can transpire in a seminar effectively undermines one or more of these six goals. As I indicated in my response to question number two, any tradition that encourages students to adopt a downside perspective regarding the teaching and learning that takes place in their seminar may diminish the value of this learning experience.

One concrete example of this phenomenon comes from a core program I studied over the course of my fieldwork. During the Winter quarter, the program faculty complained to me that student attendance in seminar (and other program activities) had dropped considerably.

Their comments suggested that they viewed these students as being disinterested, unmotivated and self-preoccupied. This behavior was blamed in part on the severity of the inclement Winter weather which many students were unused to since they had only recently moved to this area. Interestingly, the students I spoke to also complained of feeling unmotivated to attend or do the assignments with the regularity and dedication they had shown the previous quarter. Their explanation, however, differed from that of their faculty. The students agreed that they felt depressed and that the weather was a contributing factor in this respect. In addition, they also noted how hard they had been hit by the eruption of the Middle East War and how the depression they felt as a result of this had been exacerbated by the highly detailed readings on cultural genocide that they had been assigned to read and discuss that quarter. From their perspective, all of this taken together was overwhelming. They felt as if the world was falling apart in front of their eyes and that their faculty seemed oblivious to this perception. Consequently, they either felt like confronting the problems which often impacted them in very personal ways (e.g., through political protests against U.S. military action) or, alternatively, trying in some way to escape the brutality of this new reality that was shattering the ivory-tower serenity they had known.

A short time after I talked with these students, I bumped into the program's faculty coordinator. I took that opportunity to once again inquire of him how student attendance was faring. As before, he acknowledged the existence of the problem and attributed it to student disinterest and the weather. I finally asked directly if he thought it was possible that the effect of the readings, compounded as they were by the war, might have affected his students' attitudes. Once again, he minimized any connection between these two factors, and added that such a correlation "never crossed my mind."

The upshot here, of course, is that teaching and learning may have suffered because faculty and students were not being up-front about what was happening in their respective lives. In effect, they were not resolving the problem at hand, but dancing around it. In defense of the faculty, it should be noted that they, too, were under terrible pressure from the war. One outcome of this stress was that, lacking a rigid syllabus, they became uncertain of how to proceed. Should they try to continue teaching as they had planned before the hostilities, or should they change plans? And if a change was indicated, of what sort? Because of the crisis, spontaneity and serendipity could no longer be counted on to help provide an emergent sense of direction. As a result, both students and faculty became disoriented. They had lost their sense of how to cultivate and engage in mutually supportive ways of doing things that would encourage self-reflection, self-discovery and the resolution of conflicts. Instead, all bemoaned how seminars had become a "drag" since no one was inspired to participate whole-heartedly. Both students and faculty felt let down by one another. Ironically, though intercultural understanding and sensitivity were key themes in the program's agenda, neither constituency seemed able to link the theory they were studying to the problems they were experiencing in their own program culture. Finally, the fact that the problem in this program progressed to the point it did reveals that the participants felt blocked from being able to deal creatively with the diversity of different concerns and viewpoints that surrounded this issue.

While this is only one example of how the culture that evolves in a seminar may come to undermine the six teaching and learning goals, the patterns and processes involved here are representative of other instances I observed in which a learning community began to disintegrate because of a temporary or permanent loss of supportive traditions. Once traditions

of this sort are diminished, participants seem to lose their ability to pursue an approach that is reflected in the six goals.

Now there is only one question left to consider. This is derived from a statement made in Constancy and Change. I have turned it into a question because it elicits some important insights that have yet to be presented. Here then is the question: In what ways does "Evergreen [have] something special going for it in the higher education process?"

The answer to this question is in three parts. The first two items are insights that highlight fundamental aspects of Evergreen's culture. The final piece is a story that helps to put my findings into perspective. By doing so, it shows just how "special" Evergreen's culture and its impact on students really is.

The first insight consists of a set of variables that underlie and animate the supportive teaching and learning traditions, practices and ways of doing things which ideally emerge in teaching and learning cultures on campus (e.g., coordinated studies programs, as well as individual or group contracts). When a majority of these variables are present in a given setting, I have found that it is likely that the teaching and learning which transpires in that setting will be successful in the eyes of participants. That is to say, they are likely to generate stories that reflect an upside perspective on their experience. Conversely, when a significant number of these variables are absent in a particular setting, I have found that the members of that milieu are more likely to adopt a downside perspective to make sense of their educational experiences.

There are 12 variables in the set that follows. Because of Evergreen's bias toward emphasizing what is learned rather than how it is taught, I have stressed the impact of these variables on the former. Here now are the variables:

- learning is allowed to be organic and emergent
- learning is inviting
- learning is supportive
- learning is personally engaging
- learning is communal
- learning is egalitarian
- learning is playful, or at least has an element of humor
- the locus of learning is perceived to rest on the student
- learning allows students to take risks
- learning facilitates self-reflection and self-discovery

- participants expect that learning which takes place here will lead to an exhilarating sense of transformation

- all in all, learning reflects and encourages what I have heard some participants refer to as the "liberating arts"

The second cultural insight loosely builds on the first. It assumes that the above variables are present in the array of supportive traditions found in a successful teaching and learning culture at Evergreen. When this is the case as I have found it to be more often than not, something special does indeed happen: students may be able to experience a sense of transformation from one quality space to another quality space which they perceive to be more desirable. So far, this phenomenon (referred to by some insiders as the development of an individual voice) has already been described at length in the body of the report (i.e. in Chapters IV and V). The new twist on this insight is that for students to be able to experience a sense of transformation, faculty must also be free to develop themselves professionally and personally as they wish. Because their interests are comparatively free to emerge in this way instead of being constrained by departmental requirements and disciplinary affiliations, faculty can retool themselves to teach in a way that reflects their new interests. In a number of instances, Evergreen faculty have come to the college to teach in one field and then, over a period of years, have slowly developed a complementary professional expertise in new and sometimes unrelated areas.

Though all colleges and universities of which I am aware feature rhetoric that extols the idea of transformation, they often do not symbolically support this ideal through the array of traditions, practices and interactional routines that both reflect and shape their teaching and learning culture. Evergreen, on the other hand, is distinctive insofar as its teaching and learning culture really does, in many ways and to a considerable extent, facilitate a liberating feeling of transformation for students as well as faculty.

How distinctive the qualitative difference can be between Evergreen's culture and that of some mainstream institutions of higher education is expressed in the following experience story. Unlike the other accounts that have been featured in this report, this one did not originate in an Evergreen experience. Instead, it stems from a set of experiences that span more than 20 years in a host of mainstream educational institutions. What these institutions share in common, according to Sam Keen, the narrator as well as an educational philosopher, is an approach to teaching and learning that is expressed via a particular way of doing things in the classroom (Keen, 1970: 40). Although the time, place and players in the tale differ from the subject of my report, the story itself is germane to what I have found and especially to what I have not found at Evergreen.

The story begins in Sam's first-grade classroom. The teacher is Mrs. Jones. Although the time he spent in her classroom generally left him feeling depressed, he recalls that "on this particular day it was more depressing than usual." The reason for this, as he recalls, is the aversion he felt for a specific exercise. In his words,

For an eternal afternoon I sat practicing my penmanship exercises, listening to Mrs. Jones' monotone: 'Make your 'i's' come all the way up to the middle line. And don't forget to make your 'o's' nice and round. Circle, circle, circle. Period. Now repeat.'

Caught somewhere between boredom and despair I struggled against tears and settled in to wait for the . . . three o'clock bell [Keen, 1970: 38].

Clearly this rigid educational regimen and the uninviting setting in which it occurred had a dramatic negative impact on little Sam. The image he conjures up in retrospect suggests a kind of childhood prison from which there was no apparent escape. Despite Mrs. Jones' uninspiring teaching practices, however, something special did manage to penetrate the classroom and pique his attention. As he tells it,

A movement in a tree outside the window caught my eye. . . [There]. . . was a summer warbler building a nest. Caught in wonder I followed the progress of the nest construction and dreamt of the time when I would be a great ornithologist. My 'i's' and 'o's' were forgotten until Mrs. Jones materialized over my shoulder and demanded to know why three lines in my penmanship book were empty. Instinct warned me that no serendipitous warbler, no private fascination, could provide an excuse for the neglect of my serious educational duties. So I bit my tongue, cherished my wonder in silence, and stayed in after school to make up my lessons [Keen, 1970: 38 & 39].

Although he did not understand it at the time, Sam later recognized that he was involuntarily thrust into in a psychological war that was being fought over who had the right to determine what he would learn and how he would learn it. The setting for the battle was the classroom and its front-line guard was his first grade teacher. These two entities (serving symbolically as "ground" and "figure" in the tale) were key symbols (Ortner, 1973) in the skirmish. They served to coordinate and communicate a set of assumptions, values and practices, an institutional ambience, as well as a way of doing things and thinking about them that would affect his self-image and intellectual pursuits for many years to come.

In reflecting on the outcome of this war, Sam surmised that:

Mrs. Jones won more than the day. Schooling became a habit for me and I remained in the classroom for 25 years and five degrees without seriously questioning the maxim that private enthusiasm must be divorced from the educational task [underline mine] [Keen, 1970: 39].

How is it that Sam's "private enthusiasm" became "divorced" from the educational tasks he accepted as he progressed through a variety of educational institutions? It appears that his ability to imagine and fantasize diminished according to the amount of time he spent in school. These childhood propensities had been censored by a subtle though widespread institutional culture that weaned him, as it were, away from self-knowledge and personal awareness. Ultimately, he was socialized to discount the value of his interests (i.e. his "warblers") and his dreams (i.e. becoming an ornithologist). In their place, he was slowly persuaded to pay attention to the less "personal," "compelling," and more removed "public facts of the exterior world." As he looks back and attempts to make sense of the process that educated him away from himself, he realizes that:

Scarcely ever in my quarter century of schooling was I invited to consider the intimate, personal questions which were compelling my attention outside the classroom. While I was taught to hunt down the general, the universal, the abstract, and the public facts

of the exterior world, it was tacitly assumed that education had no responsibility for helping me to come to terms with the particular, the concrete, the idiosyncratic, the biographical, and the sensuous facts which formed the substance of my private existence [Keen, 1970: 39 & 40].

What then was the ultimate outcome of the 25-year education Sam had undergone which taught him to both emphasize and separate his academic learning from the pursuit of things that were personally engaging and intrinsically rewarding?

It is not surprising that when I finally left the classroom I could dot my 'i's' and make my 'o's' round. But the warbler was gone. I emerged from . . . school to discover that I was empty of enthusiasm. I had a profession but nothing to profess, knowledge but no wisdom, ideas but few feelings. Rich in techniques but poor in convictions, I had gotten an education but lost an identity [underline mine] [Keen, 1970: 40].

In closing, I would like to note that the fundamental difference I have found at Evergreen is that, unlike Sam, most of the students and faculty who told their stories to me believe that they have been supported (not thwarted) by the college's flexible and student-sensitive culture. In fact, this support is often portrayed as having helped them to reach a point where they have been able not only to find their own dreams, but to pursue their "warblers" in such a way that the experience is both meaningful and personally empowering.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX for CHAPTER V.

FACULTY OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS CONCERNING STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION AT EVERGREEN

The following faculty observation stories come from my key interviewees. These accounts contribute to this study insofar as they reveal the distinctive qualities and underlying animating characteristics that are perceived to affect students' discovery of an affirming voice at Evergreen. In many cases, these qualities and characteristics are presented as facilitating the efforts of students; in others, they are described as hampering the transformational learning process. Regardless of their perceived impact, however, these characteristics are portrayed as consisting of perspectives, practices, routines and ways of doing things that have gained traditionality at the college. As such, they represent an organizational folklore that is distinctive to Evergreen and symbolic of its culture.

This appendix is organized to reflect the world of teaching and learning portrayed in faculty members' stories. As such, it highlights the settings, activities and structures that faculty believe are central to students' participation experience. These include programs (Section A), seminars (Section B), individual and group contracts (Section C), as well as narrative evaluation proceedings (Section D). In addition, there is one more collection of faculty accounts (Section E) which highlight how the various characteristics identified in Sections A through D combine in reality to create milieux that support transformational learning experiences.

As much as possible, I have tried to organize this appendix in a way that facilitates the unfolding of the data. I have also tried to present it in a manner that makes comparisons between faculty and student perceptions of students' participation experience as convenient as possible.

As noted above, the first section of this appendix is devoted to faculty perceptions of animating characteristics in coordinated studies programs. The accounts are organized according to the characteristics and qualities that they reveal.

A. STORIES AND ANIMATING CHARACTERISTICS THAT EMERGE FROM PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

- Lecturing is a small part of program teaching and learning at Evergreen:

If you look at the total number of hours of lecturing that most Evergreen programs do in a week, it's far smaller than in a student's full-time [participation] in most other places. Lecturing is the time when the instructor does most of the talking and the student mostly listens. The students may do a kind of active listening, but they're not voicing their own opinions and they're not asking very many questions because it really disorganizes a lecture.

We move away from lecturing. Our weekly schedule has three hours of lecture. Students are in contact with faculty about 15 hours a week. We're working with students, in the same room and doing stuff and nudging and instigating and talking even 15 to 18 hours a week perhaps. But only three hours of that is really lecture time. Another three and one-half is seminar time. Then there is a bunch that is devoted to workshops and studio time. Everybody in the program is learning to draw, doing writing exercises, learning to use the MacIntosh computers, and then at the end of the week there is some whole group time in which we often go outside and have some sort of large group get-together.

- Teaching and learning are "public" and involve much face-to-face interaction:

We have a structure here (the particular commitments we've made to class size) and [a set of] founding ethics which mean that [as a faculty member] you're very often in a very face-to-face relationship with students. You're on view as a person. [A founding faculty member] keeps saying, 'Learning here is very public.' You're not learning quietly in some library carrel. You're in seminar in interaction with people or in a faculty member's office talking with them. Teaching is also public. You don't just scuttle in and give a lecture and scuttle out again. In most [program] teams, you lecture with your colleagues there [in the same room].

- Teaching and learning is active:

Over and over again for the students we say, 'You get out and do this; you sit down and do that; you do, do, do.' There's relatively less, 'Write, write, write down what we say.' So that's special, it seems to me.

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Here's an example of wanting the students to be active. We started the year [in this environmentally oriented program] working on trees. We said [to the students], 'We are not going to give you the guides and manuals for identifying the trees yet. We want you to go out in the woods to these particular sites that we've marked out for you and find what appear to be five different kinds of trees and write down your own description, as carefully as you can, of what they are and how they are different from each other.' It wasn't until four weeks into the quarter that we allowed the Bookstore to put the field guides on the shelves so that students could buy them and begin to use them.

This was a teaching tactic that we chose this year for a substantive purpose: to help students realize that there is more to learning than just finding the name. Once something is labeled, there's a tendency for students to think they've got it. [The goal of this assignment was not for students] to recreate the work of an entire taxonomy that people have labored for hundreds of years to generate. We wanted to fight against their tendency to fit into the pre-existing structure [of this taxonomy] too quickly.

The students felt that this was uncomfortable. They were right. I mean, you go out and if this is something that you haven't worked on much, you just see a big blur of trees. [So they are forced to ask questions]: 'What am I supposed to look at? What matters?' Everybody knew what a tree was, except there were some interesting confusions, what would officially be called 'confusions.' These actually point in my mind to real features of the situation. For example, a number of people picked out ferns as example of shrubs, and then were dismayed to discover that our field guide doesn't have any ferns in it whatever because field biologists don't think of woody plants and ferns as being the same sort of thing at all. Well, they aren't. They propagate differently and all this other stuff. Nevertheless, there's something related about the way a lightweight shrub grows and the way a fern grows, what they do, and so forth. So, it's not a mistake in our view for the students to have written down ferns when we sent them out to find shrubs.

Then the second part of our work in the quarter was to try and show the students that it wasn't a mistake [if they hadn't made the correct identification]. [We tried to show them] that they hadn't wasted their time by noting down things about trees that didn't end up being the identifying features that the guide had picked out.

- Program participation can lead to an emerging sense of discovery:

The unfolding of a program is special in the sense that both the students and the faculty get a richer understanding of some important points. There is this tremendous element of discovery and surprise that everybody has because the faculty didn't really know in advance that it would be so natural to talk about [certain topics beforehand.] It just became apparent. This means that there is an air in a lot of these different programs of everybody advancing in their knowledge. [This differs from an approach in which] the faculty have the knowledge and are transferring it to the students who do not have the knowledge.

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[Typically], there are some questions on the table [in a program] that the faculty are working on as well as the students. Not in the same way, necessarily, since faculty know more and have been chewing on such questions longer, but they have their own way of being involved in the questions that are being talked about. So, there's a sense that these are not dead and dry, but living things. There's a sense of progress being made.

- A sense of discovery, when it occurs, is collaborative and engaging:

The sense of discovery [that often emerges] in these team-taught programs has a bunch of benefits. [For one thing], it's done in full view of the students. On the whole, it is very close to where the students 'are.' It's not in a different world than the students [are in].

- Teaching and learning is characterized by spontaneity and improvisation:

The willingness and ability to do it 'on the roll,' as it were, is not only important in terms of the results, it's important because no one of us is smart enough to foresee these things in advance. We [as faculty] are not doing just what curriculum committees do. My sense of those (and I'm not real experienced) is that you come in with your course proposal and you're expected to present the syllabus. 'Here's what I'm going to do each session for the quarter.' And people decide whether that's the right stuff to do or not. Or, you all sit down together and plan out the way to teach the Introductory Physics, which basically is microprogramming years in advance of the actual students and the actual setting where this is going to happen.

We aren't trying to set up unchangeable pathways or structures. Instead, we're putting ourselves in the position where we know we're going to have to be inventing a fair amount as we go along. We've got somewhat practiced at doing the inventing and in knowing how to stay out of really hot water, and of correcting for our mistakes.

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You have to improvise. You see, what happens is that you can approach teaching in two ways. You can choose a model, an educational model, and apply it, or you can have it emerge. You can work inductively. I think that's a judgement that a team has to do right away. They have to look at the composition of their students. They have to try a few experiments. Then they have to make a decision as to whether to continue to impose a model or if they have to let a model emerge.

One of the things I think [is important is] to be conscious of alternatives, to be an open system, to have faculty sensitive to input from wherever it's coming. For example, recently we had a war. It caused a great deal of upheaval and the program had to change. What do you do? How do you handle that? What is it that has to be done? These are the kinds of things I'm talking about. That can go on all the time. I think one can be responsive. I think it takes a lot of courage to get, for example, into the middle of Winter and say, 'We have got to do this differently,' and start to refocus. And at Evergreen, that can be done. I usually work with teams that are capable of doing that, that will shift in midstream. They are faculty that agonize over whether we're being relevant or not and whether the learning strategies we are using are effective. If we think they're not, we change.

- Serendipity is a valued characteristic of teaching and learning:

Serendipity is in that category of stuff that can't be programmed. You can set things up so that it can't happen. That is, you can make sure it doesn't happen, consciously or unconsciously, but, even if you do things so that it ought to happen, it doesn't necessarily happen. So, some weeks [in a program] are better than others. Some [entire] programs are better than others. Still, it is surprising how much of a sense of discovery [there can be] in a moderately smooth running program.

- Evergreen faculty derive their intellectual excitement from the teaching and learning they do with their students:

Relatively few Evergreen faculty are doing research projects of their own in the very standard scholarly sort of sense. Research, in general, is what people think is important because it keeps you intellectually alive, learning new things, and adding to your stock. So even if the main part of your institution is to be a teaching place, most institutions think it's important for faculty to do scholarship.

We think it's important, too. But being realistic about it, we recognize that there are only 24 hours in a day and that the wrong emphasis on scholarship, given short money and short time, produces lots of bad scholarship and that that isn't any good for anybody. It's not good for posterity. It's not good for the students. It's not good for the faculty. It's also unecological. You could chew up a lot of trees producing things that nobody reads. And they're right; they shouldn't be read. They aren't actual additions to knowledge, although you can get very absorbed in it and very invested in it. Little bricks added to the outbuildings of knowledge are not actually much help to anybody.

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As faculty plan a coordinated studies program, various [interdisciplinary] links come into view. That's part of what gets the faculty excited about a program before it starts. But [they never get] as fully and intimately excited beforehand as they do when they actually start working with particular books, field observations and so forth. This is the thing that substitutes here for active [faculty] research.

- Effective teaching in a coordinated studies program stems from faculty interest and adaptability:

It takes a faculty team that themselves are genuinely interested in the subject matter. They're not [teaching this program] because they ought to. They're doing it because the theme of the program or something about working with the material is genuinely interesting [to them].

Secondly, they need to be resourceful teachers. They either need to have a big bag of tricks already or they need to be creative and good at inventing things on the fly. [This is] because inevitably you find that programs just don't fall together in standard units. You keep needing to find ways to do something that you imagine being able to do. [For example, we did] a writing exercise [in our program today] that links up with the stuff we studied last week. [This included] a field trip [to a place] where we saw some threatened old growth forest. So we took advantage of that experience and came up with a way of having it culminate in a writing exercise.

Animating characteristics that are perceived to thwart students' discovery of a voice in program settings:

- Concern that students may not do their work:

A weakness of Evergreen is the fear, I think, of some faculty that people are not going to do their work. I think that there are some students who don't do their work, but I think that most do. I think two-thirds do their work and do more work than if you just stood looking over their shoulder. And I think that's the difference between a traditional college and us.

- Participants may become too ensconced in their program:

There's a tendency for people to become aligned with their program so they lose the vision of what Evergreen is [as a whole]. It's the paradox again: you walk into an open system and it becomes a closed system. They end up (especially if they come out of a program [like mine]) they become part of a community. We're asking them for everything. We're asking them to re-identify themselves to the program. In a sense, at Evergreen [your program] becomes your life. That's where your allegiance and loyalty lies. I don't use those words, but obviously all of the process goes into that. So when you see that, how do you iron those things out? A student comes here and has four programs over four years. Four programs [total]. Is that learning? I don't know.

I think one of the downsides of the coordinated studies programs is that they are (or have a tendency to become) little isolated communities. I think that the climate of the institution outside of that little community, of which that program is one piece, needs to be very vital, alive, and seductive even. It needs to draw people out of the program microcommunity and into the larger one. That's an ongoing tension in the institution. Sometimes the climate outside of the coordinated studies program seems very attractive to students and faculty and so it does draw them out so that there is less isolation.

- Concern over whether advanced studies can be done at Evergreen, due to its flexible approach:

A question that I've heard from students and something that I'm experimenting with next year, is can you really have an advanced class here? My son left Evergreen because he felt he could not. He was here two years and he felt he could not get any more out of Evergreen. And so he went to where he'd have advanced courses. He wanted to become a painter, and he felt that he couldn't learn anymore.

- There can be a downside to "The Evergreen Experience":

People come here for 'The Evergreen Experience,' and [as far as they're concerned] that experience far outweighs what they might or might not learn. I heard that the

other day from one of the Deans. We were talking about this, and he said he remembers a student who felt that there was no [way to] advance [here]. He wanted to go to a prestigious graduate school. [To do so, however] he had to do his senior year all over again. But he would never trade those four years at Evergreen. They were marvelous for him and he could care less about doing the extra year in order to prepare himself for graduate study. So there's The Evergreen Experience.

- Doing mathematics is problematic at Evergreen:

There is a vicious cycle here. We're not good in math, in part because the students that come to Evergreen, in general, are not very interested in mathematics. So, we don't have many good math programs offered. And because not enough math programs are offered, then this is not a very good place to do math.

One way to [break that cycle] is to try to change the attitude of the faculty. Now the faculty is divided in several groups. Some people do not want to deal with mathematics, period. Several faculty members have said very clearly, 'I just don't want to do any math. I don't care about math.' This is interesting because one of the ideas here about math, or quantitative skills, is that somehow it is [on a par] with writing skills. [But] no faculty member would admit (at least in public) that they don't want to deal with writing or that they're terrible writers. Somehow, it is assumed that they have to be able to write English.

But with mathematics, it's different. It's accepted to be bad in math. It sometimes even goes along with different political ideas, because some people tend to blame our ecological problems on technology and, therefore, on mathematics. One student even said to me that mathematics is evil because mathematics created the atomic bomb. That kind of idea is probably among [some] faculty members, so that could make it very difficult if not impossible to change the attitude of the faculty.

- Programs sometimes break up:

Programs used to have these big breakups, these divorces, right in the middle. The program faculty would have to go to the dean, have these big grievance procedures and the program would dissolve. I think it's very healthy myself that they would do that. Let's say that there were three faculty and two were really embarrassed by what one was doing [in the way of scholarship]. [They might then] embarrass that person in front of the students. Or [maybe they] just couldn't agree on procedure. [Anyway], they'd have to have an adjudicator to help them work it out.

If they couldn't work it out, they'd break into group contracts. So a coordinated studies program would break into group contracts, like having kittens. And each faculty person would go off with a group of people. That doesn't happen [much] anymore because we [now] make our own programs. No one just puts us into them, and we are real careful about which ones we get into. So [since] you're responsible, you just won't get into a planning team that you know will get into trouble down the road.

##

I was in the first program at Evergreen to ever break up. God, that was painful. It was a mix of personalities, agendas and issues that probably should never have occurred. There were a lot of strong personalities with very different ideas [on the subjects at hand]. They would not compromise very easily.

- Despite their generally negative character, program break-ups can have a positive impact on some students:

What was interesting was that even though the class broke up, three or four of Evergreen's most successful students came out of that program. A couple of them went on to become Hollywood film directors. Another is selling solar panels to third-world countries. The thing was, the structures were so much looser in the early days of the college than they are now. Also, a lot of the students here had transferred from other schools and had already acquired the skills they needed to do advanced work.

##

[In our program], we had a very strong community until the faculty disagreements really contaminated the atmosphere. [Even so], I think we were successful in a strange sort of way. I think we had people who were really interested in each other. And I think that it was going well until about the seventh week. Then the differences [between the faculty] became so traumatic that it just poisoned the entire program.

[This program break-up] was a tragedy. It was heartbreaking. It was a program that I had put my heart and soul into. I had two students who just came here and banged on my door and said, 'I'm here because of this program.' Then the catalog came out. Some kid in Minnesota was sitting in the library [looking at the Evergreen catalog] and said, 'My God, this program's perfect. I've never heard of a program like this before.' A kid [called me and said he wanted to come here from] the University of ----- . I said, 'Look, they have the best programs in the world there. What ever would compel you to come up here?' Well, he said, 'This program.'

So it was a program [in which students] had incredibly high expectations. And for the first five weeks it was very, very good. Then there was that undercurrent which I guess I was oblivious to. That just exploded like Mount Saint Helens. Once it erupted there was nothing that we could do to put it together again.

B. SEMINAR PARTICIPATION THEMES

This section opens with faculty stories that reveal an upside to seminar, both for students and for themselves.

- Seminars encourage active forms of student participation:

It seems to me that we ask students in a number of different ways, formally and informally, to be active in their education here. We ask them to take an active role in a variety of different ways. This is rhetorically not a strange thing to say. Lots of college-level people, when they start talking about what an education is for, talk about how they want students to become able to think their own thoughts, take a stand, dig up resources, conceive research projects, and various things that have an active tone.

I think we make that rhetoric real in some unusual ways. For example, we do a lot of seminar teaching. That is, we set up a lot of seminars. And when we get into the seminars, lots of people here (maybe most) think that the thing that should happen in there is for the students to do the talking.

This raises a very interesting and funny situation: if the students are doing all the talking, then when is the teaching happening? I think one of the things that people have to do to learn to work in this system is to change their whole idea of what teachers are supposed to do. My language for it is that actually the teaching isn't primarily important. What is primarily important is learning. Anybody who has any way to get learning to happen has got a good thing going and should keep it going. And the more learning you can get to happen the better. And so, what the teachers or instructors or professors or whatever are supposed to do here is to aid and abet the learning. And sometimes you do that by getting into the background and staying there.

##

In seminar, the thing that should be happening (the ideal toward which you are striving) is for the students to do almost all the talking and for the talking to be very probing and also very careful and also very kind of exploratory and wide-ranging. Those values cut against each other. In any case, students, when they first come here (or to any college), don't do that automatically. So, the faculty member's job is to get this idea across to them.

A special thing here is that the instructor in a seminar situation needs to be quite aware of working backward out of the scene. It's even worse for the instructor to talk too much [in seminar] than for one of the students to talk too much and dominate the discussion.

- Faculty try a variety of strategies in seminar to facilitate active student participation:

One of the things we do [in my programs] is create seminars of students and [then] the faculty [rotate and] are visitors to [each of] these seminars.

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In the Spring [we have sometimes done] away with the seminar as such. [Instead] we have asked students to spontaneously put themselves in seminars. So [for example], we may say, "OK, seminar time; break up into seminars." On that particular day the

students may refuse to break up into seminars, so we stay in the large group. [On the other hand], they may break up into small groups of five or six. [Or] some may want to stay in large groups. What happens during that seminar period is that you could have groups of eight and groups of three. And then what we, the faculty, do is float [from group to group]. We sit and sort of eavesdrop. Sometimes we're invited to become involved and sometimes we're not, but we certainly eavesdrop. This normally happens in the spring when people know each other and they know what they want to talk about. Again, it is open to the student initiative. So we ask ourselves [as a group], how can we [best use a] seminar? We all know each other [by this point], so why not keep it an open system? [In] these improvisational seminars, the spirit of seminar continues but its makeup is free. People become involved in whatever they want to discuss, and people are pretty dependable.

- Teaching diversity, and respect for diversity, in seminar:

What we want is for people to take care of each other. We accept the fact that this is a community of diverse cultures. Whatever [their background is] is coming from outside this artificial community that we put together. We want them to be tolerant of each other. We want the conservative students and the Evergreen Christians to feel just as at home as the people who are against the war or whatever. That's what we, in a sense, preach: that our diverse community is a microcosm of the society and we are going to try to model how these diverse cultures and viewpoints can survive, how they can become involved in a dialogue without upsetting each other too much, without being offensive [to one another].

- Seminar is better for some kinds of teaching and learning than it is for others:

Where I have been able to use [seminar] most successfully has been dealing with biography or literary works related to the theme at hand. Books that would sort of lay out semi-technical, semi-social policy related things about the 1990s' bomb in seminar. There's not enough substance to make for an interesting discussion. You can agree with the material or disagree with it. And if you disagree with it you start picking at it. You can talk about the author's biases, but so what? Whereas when you talk about a biography or autobiography, all sorts of other things come into play that have to do with personal experience. And I guess one of the things that I have learned at Evergreen (although it is not unique to this school by any means) is that an important way of connecting abstract academic material for students is through a connection with the students own biography, their own personal experience. Reading about others is often a powerful connector, modeler, or other for students. Similarly with literary works, novels are wonderful for seminar. They're wonderful. It provokes a lot of examination of one's own values and thoughts. It provokes a lot of comparison to what is going on in society. It provokes a lot of comparison or even analysis of one's own visions about where we ought to be going. These make for really rich wonderful discussions.

Perceived downsides to seminar participation:

- When seminars flounder, the whole world may seem to be shaken:

These things [seminars] can be bombs. My god, the world [can sometimes seem to be] coming apart. The challenge of dealing with content, with subject matter, but also, at the same time, dealing with people [can be very difficult].

- Concern that seminar may not meet the varying needs of all students:

The seminar isn't for everybody. Working-class kids, kids of color, shy kids, they don't like seminar. It's terrifying for them. Seminar is very middle-class, very bourgeois. People go there and talk. It's a very culture-bound, very middle-class system. You get some working-class kid, or some kids that are the first [in their family] to come to college, and it terrifies the hell out of them.

What we try to do [about this] is break [students] into groups of three, four or five, and mix them endlessly so that everybody gets to know everybody. We get to formulate a learning community. The program becomes a learning community and people begin to care for each other. My experience has been that if you can get people to care for each other a little bit (they don't have to love each other or necessarily agree with each other) but if they can see how a person can help them, then they become more collaborative.

[We] break up people into small groups, give them assignments, have them work together, and keep shifting them [into other small groups]. Another thing that we [have done] is [invert] the normal seminar procedure, [which] is to have a faculty member [on a program team] and to have a seminar assigned to that faculty member. What we did was we simply had students become seminars, and then we [as faculty] rotated. [In this way] students were able to experience all of their faculty team members.

##

One of the things that I've told my faculty of color colleagues and the deans of color is that I don't think that some of the students of color are prepared for the seminar. I think the seminar can be very threatening. It's very, very white and very middle-class. And working-class students are not. Women who [have been] homemakers and are now returning, the seminar terrifies them. And I think sometimes we forget that. So I think the seminar has its place but I don't think it's the 'be-all' [and 'end-all'].

- Concern that seminars do not adequately teach students to think critically:

One of the things that I think impedes learning here has been an overemphasis on the notion of seminar as a mode of teaching. I was first stung by this idea two or three years ago when I went to a local coffee house, the Asterisk. I overheard one student

saying to the other that they were going to go back, re-enroll in Evergreen this spring quarter, and take a couple of courses. What they then said not only stung, but it rang true. I guess that's why it stung. They said, 'Well, all you have to do is go out there and talk in seminar. You don't have to even read the book. You can just bullshit your way through.'

I think that is a negative animating feature: an overemphasis on the seminar form where it becomes, in some sense, the mouthing of platitudes. And I think that most of us on the faculty try to guard against the mouthing of platitudes. But there are a lot of students who will do it anyway. This emphasis on seminar has led to a lack of desire to do analysis or synthesis at this school. I think we aren't asking enough of our students in the way of analysis in seminars let alone other settings. I guess, I'm quick to blame seminar.

##

[My concern with seminar is over] how people use the form. [The problem] is not the form itself. But I do see the sloppiest work from students is in seminar, amazingly. Now maybe that's because I'm in the sciences and you can't fake a lot of the mathematical or physical stuff that we do. Maybe it's because you either get it or you don't [in science]. Maybe my own outlook is biased by the subject matter that I'm teaching. But I see the sloppiest work from students in seminar, sloppier than their writing, which at times is sloppy, but often can be brilliant. And I have not felt the same intensity about the desirability of seminar as have a lot of the founders and the old guard.

##

I don't know how to get that same high quality of work out of students in seminar that they will produce in other areas. Let's put it that way. I'll own the problem. I don't know how to do this. And I guess I could generalize a little bit by saying I haven't seen it from many other faculty either. This may have something to do with my own internal sense of standards, but I'm not convinced that other faculty are getting particularly high quality work out of seminar either. Yes, in some cases and for some students I think that many of us are doing that. But as a general observation, a lot of students just don't seem to put the same effort into it. I'm not one of the old-timers that will tell you that you must have two, three-hour seminars per week or you're not teaching a real Evergreen program.

C. INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP CONTRACT PARTICIPATION:

- Contract study complements program study:

For most of us, we realized the old Socratic position that learning is a community experience, a social experience. Learning is something that happens when people discuss,

and it's not a solitary kind of thing that a person finds from being holed up in the library by themselves.

So when I began to look at independent study programs, I saw a kind of tension between the two different modes. I could see tremendous value in both of them. The seminar was extraordinary. But then, as an individual, a person could study in a way tailored to the knowledge they already had [through an individual contract].

One of the big advancements in my own learning about what education is and has been to me has been to work through resolving that tension. I realize that it's not a one or the other situation. Evergreen has established both methods of teaching [i.e. seminar and contracts], and both are integral to the learning process that goes on here.

- Why students get involved in individual contract study:

They came here and they found something. They found freedom and liberty and expression [through their programs]. Now they want to go out there and apply it somewhere.

##

Some of our structures outside of the classroom contribute to this [voice creation] process as well. For example, we have this individual contract option. It's not easy to get an individual contract because there aren't very many faculty able to do it as their main teaching load. Most people are in the team-taught programs. [However], almost everyone in the team-taught programs is willing to take some contract students.

So there's this rather challenging, often difficult (I think sometimes quite frustrating) thing that students get involved in. They have an idea for a contract and then they have to find a contract sponsor. This means going to a bunch of offices and trying to get someone interested in taking you on, someone who knows some stuff. It can't just be anybody. But, of course, exactly who is appropriate depends on the project. In any case, you have to go and put your ideas out. You come into the office and the faculty member says in effect, 'So, you have this contract idea. Tell me about it.' They both know that contracts do get agreed on, and that it's never OK to refuse to think seriously about a student's [proposed] project. They both know that, nevertheless, this particular idea that this student has may be terribly unformed and not ready to go. So then there's a negotiation [process] as the student goes around and talks to five or six people.

Sometimes (maybe the majority of the time) the negotiation is very short. The faculty member says something like, 'Well, I can't take any contracts this quarter. I'm all full.' Or, 'I really don't know anything about that. Talk to so-and-so.' But, often enough, the conversation gets prolonged. The faculty member says, 'Well, tell me more about this. Have you thought of such and such? I really don't think you can do that in a quarter.' Various things of that sort. Or, 'If I were you, I'd do such-and-such.' I think

all of us find that even when we're feeling overworked, some student comes in and you talk for a while, and you start to get a little interested in what they might be able to do. Or, you think that they have a right to try that thing out that they're proposing.

If you talk to 150 different people, you'll probably find 150 different criteria at work. And that's fine, because that means the student is going into an environment where somewhere there's probably some support for the idea. And then he's getting this practice in formulating it and then reformulating it, and needing to be interactive about it, this idea that matters to the student. He wouldn't be doing it at all if it was just an amusement. The student only gets into this game because the outcome matters. And as people say over and over again about teaching writing, and I think about teaching anything, one of the things that makes the biggest difference is for the outcome of the exercise to matter to the student. What's tricky is, how do you do this without it being a game imposed by the faculty or without it being at the mercy of the student's whims which are the two poles of the whole business?

- The option of Individual contracts enables students to keep their idealism and find a vision:

The way we do things here allows students to go forward with some of their idealism. That is, it tempers it in the sense of making it responsive to conditions and realities. But, we don't have the message that you need to give up your idealism in order to get along in the world, that you just have to set it aside and say, 'Oh, there may be ways to do this.' Back to some of the structural stuff: we embody that message. The fact that there are individual contracts which you can negotiate your way into if you're articulate and thoughtful means that you can have a vision.

- Group contracts and their differences:

There are two kinds of group contracts. One is where the faculty decides that there is something that they want to focus on with a group of students. It's usually on some narrow topic. Often group contracts are for 12 credits, so that a student can pick up a module for four credits. Traditionally, when I first got here, you'd have a two-quarter coordinated studies program and in the spring, it was kind of vague on purpose. So if things grew out of the two quarters, there were faculty on hand to sponsor students who now had a passion to study something on their own. Often programs are designed like that. There are two quarters of intense, guided work. Then in the spring, the students are let go to do their own thing.

[This earlier approach to program design] was kind of disappearing [at one point], as was the fact that students knew they could form groups. So, I designed a program called S.O.S. because I saw it as an emergency. It stood for 'Student-Originated-Studies.' But it really meant, 'You better do it or the college is going to die.' So, I made a list of rules about how to do this. I knew that in order for a cluster contract to work, they would have to plan together. They had to have a covenant, a syllabus, a weekly plan, a theme. They had to have a sense of where they were going, what their goals were for the quarter, and discuss it, put it all in writing, and sign it.

I thought the college was really in bad shape, because [when] I put that in the catalog, students would come to see me and say, 'I've come to join S.O.S.' I'd say, 'You can't join S.O.S. You have to make one.' They would say, 'How can I find other students to work with?' I would say, 'Just do it.' It was terrible. People would come to join the class all the time, and I would argue with them, trying to get them to do their own thing. Some people would make a program, bring it to me, and ask me to sponsor it. I'd say, 'Where are the people? You all need to come together.' I can't tell you how many persons and small groups and things I've turned away that weren't organized, or didn't figure it out, or whatever. Somewhere along the way, somebody gets it, and does it. But very few, very few.

[Over the last few years], a lot of our students haven't had any sense [of how to go about this process]. It was so discouraging that there are some sort of organizational skills and community building skills that the college is not providing for. Things are [primarily] happening at the top level. [Faculty] are planning everything. Earlier, the students were more involved. The faculty would have a skeletal framework and the students would fill it in. But right now, the students are much younger. We used to have a much higher transfer student body, but now we have a 75% increase in students right out of high school. But still, how are they going to learn without doing it? So, it doesn't feel like that part is being worked out for them.

D. EVALUATION PARTICIPATION:

- Evergreen's approach to evaluation affects the nature of learning that transpires:

At the end [of a group contract], when we talk about the evaluation process, the students all agree that while they were interested in the material (the books, and so on), the most they got out of it was about interpersonal communications, standing by their commitments, and having to deal with negative experiences without teacher intervention. So they had to do it themselves, and many of them had never been put in that position. If someone was absent a lot, they had to take care of it. They couldn't squeal on each other unless someone was really in trouble. I'd tell them that if things weren't working, they would have to try to work it out themselves. Only after they had tried everything would I come in. So that was agreed. That was important to them, building their own ways of dealing with conflict resolution. They had all kinds of theories about it. So, I tried to get them to write about it because then their evaluations were really informative for them.

In the group contracts, and individual contracts which are designed by students, they decide what the objectives and activities are. They write them down at the beginning so that at the end they can match up what they did with what they wanted to do. Sometimes they did more; sometimes they did something else. That's OK, as long as the quality of work is still there. The only time credit is not given is if they didn't do anything. I think that faculty here have learned to say, "What did you do instead?" When you say that, students say that it didn't matter because it wasn't in the contract. If you pursue it, you find out that they worked for 20 hours a week at the Bat-

tered Women's Shelter downtown. They took workshops and stuff, and basically did a whole other course. It wasn't the course they said they would do, but then you can work it out with them to change the contract, so that it is different. [You need to be] flexible.

- Lack of time at Evergreen is a recurring theme in students' narrative evaluations:

There must be more time [to do things] and it must be related to [clearer] limits. [This feeling on the part of students stems from] this thing that faculty did for a long time, and I'm not clear as to whether they still do this. They sort of set a floor for receiving credit, a minimum, but then they don't set a ceiling. They use the evaluation as a floor: if you get an evaluation, it means that you've reached the floor. But there is no ceiling. There is nothing that says, 'This is all you have to do to get an A,' or, in our language, 'to get the best evaluation possible.' So, there is this struggle that the students go through who are really in love with their subject, are real achievers or whatever. They don't know when to stop. They just keep right on going. Or they take an incomplete because they didn't make the ceiling. So that's a limitation, a setting-limits problem, that they can learn from having been here. And that learning can be painful. It is a really important lesson: when to say, 'Enough,' and where you negotiate the stopping point between what is possible and what is doable.

Here is an example. [There was] a student who wanted to organize a conference at Evergreen on whales. He had fallen in love with whales. He was going about learning everything he could about whales. He was doing it through biology. He was looking at other things to. It seems to me that it was a year-long project involving a bunch of things, but basically he couldn't pull it off. I happen to know enough about this particular case that I know that the faculty member said to the student, 'Well that's a pretty ambitious project here. Why don't you kind of calendar-it-out? Estimate all of the things that you've said that you wanted to do and see if it is doable.' The student did such a calendar and arrived at the conclusion that it was doable. Then he fell behind and didn't pull off this conference.

But that never happened to him again. He learned that he wasn't a failure. At first that was his conclusion, that he was a failure. Then in the second quarter of the next year he realized that he had benefitted. The insight came when the next thing that he decided to do at Evergreen was doable. He experienced tremendous success. Both in terms of completing the project and the quality of it. It still had to do with whales. He figured it out for himself.

- Narrative evaluations facilitate a special kind of student development:

I think the evaluation system is the best [animating characteristic at Evergreen]. I think it's totally exhausting and I think I'm going to have to take early retirement because of it, but I wouldn't change it at all. I think the narrative evaluation process is wonderful. I think the faculty are getting tired and burned out, but I still think it's the best thing. I love it. Sitting with the students and having them experience, in writing or

in conversation, their own evolution. It's a focus on an evolutionary experience rather than a test/achievement or something. The process is so good, so touching. Remarkable achievements happen in students' lives. [There are] integrations of their personality and academic achievement. [So many] parallels go on there. Students develop such an acute way of seeing what's happening. [As a result], when students have been here for a few years, you can't pull the wool over their eyes. They see what is going on.

##

Narrative evaluations are high on my own list [of 'animating characteristics' here]. Although I was aware of them having been here as a visiting faculty, at that time I do not think I would have gone to the wall to defend them. They were a convenience. I had been giving grades ten years previous to that and I'd often wished for the chance to write something to do with the grade, because a grade doesn't tell it all. One letter can't.

But what I saw in my first three years here [as a regular member of the faculty], in terms of the effect of narrative evaluations on student learning, has convinced me that grades should be canned nationwide. Students get out of a competitive learning mode when there are narrative evaluations. Now I am not repeating rhetoric here. This is my own observation here based upon comparison. This is not the party line. This is observation. They see learning as a more exciting enterprise. Curiosity and the desire to work with one another (even help one another, for heaven's sake) surface rather than a sense of you've got to beat out somebody else because there are only going to be five A's given in the class. It is a marked change on the student attitude toward learning. So that stands out for me as an [Evergreen] characteristic that is fairly fundamental.

- Narrative evaluations can have a downside:

A person at Evergreen can be doing C, D, F work, and because of the nature of the evaluation system where human relations are such that it's hard to be harsh with each other [they] never know they're doing C, D, and F work. {That is}, unless they run into someone who will tell them. Then again, I not sure we can run this college and have it be as good as it is and solve that problem. I think it's built into the system because we stress that students should take responsibility for their own education.

E. FACULTY AND STUDENTS AT WORK: A SYNERGY OF ANIMATING CHARACTERISTICS THAT FACILITATE LEARNING AND THE DISCOVERY OF A VOICE:

Thus far, this appendix has presented faculty stories that identify specific animating characteristics unique to Evergreen. This section, however, departs from such a particularistic

approach. The stories that follow show how many of these characteristics may combine synergistically in real-life teaching and learning situations on campus. They support my finding that the freedom, spontaneity and experimentation facilitated by Evergreen's culture allows students to explore alternate realities and identities. As a result, they have the opportunity to learn to dream and then to pursue their dreams. According to a number of my interviewees as well as my own observations, the outcome of this cultural synergy is an environment that fosters creativity. This, in turn, may give rise to transformational learning that can lead to the discovery of a meaningful voice.

Now, the accounts:

I have been nagged by this idea of why couldn't we build a freshmen Core program where two faculty are resource people that support a teaching team of six. That seems big, but what I see is that each three faculty have a faculty member who is a resource person, who might be film, literature or dance. Those facilitating faculty would not have any seminar students; they would be consultants to the whole program. They could have specialized skills in math or dance, for example. They would be advisors to the faculty to weave dance into history. Let's teach the students how to do pirouettes and why the pirouette might not only be interesting as a geometric physics problem, to get the body to spin like that, but to increase the experiential connection. We do not balance that brain/body stuff with history students, with psychology students or all the places where it is real book-intensive. Maybe in '92 we will offer a real experimental thing and call it "Music and Dance in Modern Culture." Try to weave a consultant role within the content role.

##

Normally the team that I work with shares my sense of adventure and innovation, so we do a lot of different things. For example, [I've been involved] in a situation where the students have actually held a conference. [They] put together a conference at the end [of the program]. They literally formulated the conference. They formed teams, brought in outside speakers, and it became a culmination of the year.

##

[Another program] we did together [focused on] the notion of visual thinking. So we spent a lot of time where we asked people not to write but to concentrate on visual thinking. We did a lot of problem-solving through beginning to appreciate the visual aspects, and we asked people to create portfolios where everything was visual. We asked them to concentrate on being visual. If they had to use words, they could put them in something that was a visual arrangement. We used concrete language and poetry which is very visual and things of that sort. So we tried to bring into focus, I think, the different ways of knowing [in this way].

##

One time [those of us teaching together in a program] decided we would look at the lecture [as a form]. We had a whole quarter where there were no textbooks at all.

[Instead] we invited excellent lecturers. The students were obligated to learn through lectures. We had a series of themes and tried to recruit lecturers on these different themes. The students wrote a response paper to each lecture they heard. We did it basically because, as a team, we had no faith in the lecture, but we knew it had its place. We wanted to make sure the students were able to understand the function of the lecture. We started out lecturing on the lecture, what makes for a good lecture. And then we had faculty from Evergreen come in [to lecture even though] we knew some people were not going to [lecture] because they would resist it.

----- was one person who did that. She started out by saying, 'I'm not going to lecture' and she passed out three-by-five cards, and let students write questions on those cards, and that [became] her lecture. She responded to the questions on these cards.

##

In [my first] program, we did a social simulation at the end of the year. We took students out to Hope Island, which is this little itty-bitty island off Steamboat Island at the bottom of the Sound. We moved them out there in campsites, in a camp for two weeks. Our mission, while we were out there, was to design what we thought was an ideal society. That was the plan, to work out what we figured an ideal society was. The project wasn't a huge success, because we came up with some stuff, but what happened was that in some ways we lived an ideal society. That is to say, we just lived together. Everybody did everything, everybody shared everything. What mattered were the things that had to get done. [These became] more important than age, race, sex, whatever.

##

There was one [program] that I did which felt at the time like an extension of my feelings about Evergreen as being an innovative place. This is [supposed to be] a place where you can do things you can't do anywhere else. So I designed a program that really tested that, and it tested me, I tell you. It was called 'Autobiography, Fact and Fantasy.' In the program description I said that there is a strong possibility that if circumstances were different in our childhood, and if we were brought up differently in a different place and in a different time, that we would be somebody else. And that the reason we like the literature and art and movies that we like is that they refer to the people we might have been, had circumstances been different, [because] we identify with all these different people. I said, let us assume that within us, there is the potential of another character. That if we could be anyone, of any time, of any gender, in any place that we wanted to, the roots of that wish, the reality that is within us at the moment, we know what it would be, if we do a little work. So this program will be about developing the autobiography of a character that we could have been, or might be, and we would spend 10 weeks developing that person's life in any media we knew about.

I taught it with two other people. It's actually a funny story. [There was a male faculty member as well as another female faculty member who co-taught it with me].

At the time, [the male faculty member's] field was photography and video; he was kind of a media person. [The female faculty member] was a poet and literature person.

The first day we said, 'OK, here is how it's going to work: one week doing a lot of writing, and identifying the crossroads in our lives, times when we could have done this, but circumstances were such that we had to do the other. We went with this person, but we could have gone with the other person. Roads not taken, you know.' We did some reading about developing histories and I asked them toward the end of the week to list the characters that came to them. 'After all this work, what comes to mind? You're ready to go; you can step into everybody's shoes.' So they wrote a whole bunch and I said, 'They're all possible, but for the purposes of what we are going to do, you'll have to choose one. So go home, sleep on it, decide, and tomorrow you're going to sign a contract.' So they did. They all went home. And the contracts (I wish I had a copy of one) said, 'I will write the autobiography of such and such a person by becoming them for short periods of time. I promise not to abandon my character for the whole ten weeks no matter what.'

I saw this as a way for people to develop their intuition and creative abilities. I was not at all interested in any kind of therapeutic or psychological kind of work. That was not in my mind at all. It was mostly the creativity and imagining thing. Imagining through some deep feeling or connection, not just making stuff up that doesn't matter to you, you know. I wanted them to live with the things they created, not just make them up and leave them. We started, and the characters came, and there were a lot of them. We had 60 students. Each one had another character, so therefore I had 120 students in the program.

The worst part was that [the male faculty member] got a character. He was a second baseman for some baseball team; Cabin Cruiser was his [character's assumed] name. [The female faculty member] became an ancient Chinese warrior. I didn't have a character yet because I was too busy taking care of everything. I'll just tell you some of the characters. There was one student in the program, 19 years old, who became an 80-year-old, Black clarinet player, a man, from New Orleans, who only had a year to live. How she came upon that, don't ask me. This science student became a great painter, from the 18th century. There were three or four people in the class who became infants. They were between the ages of four and eight. There was a Viet Nam war veteran, who became a 16-year-old girl. There were two or three people from other planets. There were all sorts of things like that. So, people were developing these lives. We wrote autobiographies, and we talked about them in seminar.

We had Thursday afternoon as the time they would come in their character. And I chose that afternoon as the time when we would have visiting lecturers. We called it the 'Irrelevant Lecture Series' because we didn't know what anyone needed to hear. Everyone had their own work they were doing and it was bound to be irrelevant to someone. We had people come and give talks on any topic someone could want to give a talk on, whenever one of these characters needed to hear a talk on something. So we had talks on mathematics, and physics, foreign languages. We had two talks totally given in a foreign language. No one knew what the hell they were talking

about. We had music from other countries. These poor lecturers. The students were in character, so I tried to warn the lecturers [that] the students would come in costumes.

Two things happened that were very peculiar which made me feel I had taken on more than I could deal with. One is, I 'lost' both faculty. They were in it, but they became their characters constantly. They enjoyed it so much. They would come in costumes every day. [The male faculty member] would never sit in his office. I'd say, 'We have to have a meeting,' and he'd say, 'No, sorry, I have to go to practice.' He did not let up for 10 weeks. [The female faculty member] turned her whole office into a meditation center. She actually redecorated it, and when we went in we had to take off our shoes. And she had incense burning all the time. And she totally devoted herself to learning how to use Chinese calligraphy. Anybody who wanted to see her had to sit while she did this. People would say, 'Look, my tuition isn't coming through, or I need help with financial aid,' or something like that, and she'd be doing her calligraphy. I could not get [the female faculty member] or [the male faculty member] to participate in any of the business of the program. I was so desperate.

I said, 'Look, I can't handle this. It's all getting out of hand.' One student (a woman) left the program. I asked, 'Why are you leaving the program?' She said, 'My character wants to have a baby.' I said, 'Wait a minute. Who wants to have it? You want to have it.' She said, 'No, I don't.' So, I said, 'But you're going to be the one having the baby.' She said, 'Yeah, well I figure it's the least I can do for my character.'

Another guy had dyslexia, and in the program, he chose a character who didn't have it. So, he was able to do a lot of things he couldn't do. He actually hypnotized himself. So those kinds of things were going on. So someone suggested that I get a character to try and deal with this. So I was forced into having a character.

I came up with this woman named Mary Simmons, a Black woman, who lived in the forties in San Francisco. She attended this kind of church there, and the basis of the church was some sort of philosophy, and they would have these talks, these lectures, on different topics. So this woman says to me, 'Everything's fine. Don't worry about it. Just every once in a while give one of these lectures that I will tell you to give.' So she would write these lectures for me, and I had a series of about six lectures that she wrote. The first one I was a wreck, knowing that I had to give this lecture. It was on trees. 'How to be in a relationship with a tree,' or some such thing. It was very interesting, I thought. I called the students together and told them I wanted to introduce them to my character. It was a Thursday, and I started giving these talks to these students on these odd topics. Actually things calmed down. I was so surprised. And the students loved this character, and they'd make appointments to see her. I'd say, 'Come on, there is no Mary Simmons really. You can't see her.' They said, 'We can see Cabin Cruiser, and the Chinese warrior, why can't we see Mary Simmons?' But, fortunately, it was only one quarter long. I don't know what I would have done if it had been two. I would have had to have ended it.

[A colleague] kept saying to me, 'Start planning how you're going to end it. What are you going to do? You gonna kill them all?' So what we did is we tried to make it in the end as if the characters had been visiting and that they were now going back. We were going to have a big farewell party for them. And I said, 'You can decide how you want to have a farewell party for this character. I mean if you had a really good friend visiting, you wouldn't want to invite the whole program, and you might not want to do it on campus. You might have just a few people over and have a dinner, you know. How would you do that?' So each person planned their own farewell party for their character. And you got invitations if you were to be included.

The faculty, we were worried, because if we didn't get invited then we wouldn't know anything. It was also kind of a final presentation time. So, they were presenting the work they had done all quarter to these special guests who were invited. And if the faculty weren't invited, how would we evaluate them?

These programs were kind of like shots in the dark. That was a program that was called an Annual. We don't have annuals anymore. For the most part people were loosely associated with areas so we could be providing some kind of beginning, intermediate, advanced step level in disciplinary work, even though they were in these big contexts. Then we had these annuals. The specialty area stuff happened when we were having an enrollment crisis here, and there was some worry that the whole issue of 'interdisciplinary-and-no-departments' was so confusing that people weren't coming and we somehow had to re-adjust ourselves, and make ourselves clearer. It was supposed to be just a temporary thing.

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[Some student] projects in the community [that grew out of programs] have turned into big deals. In one case some students did a design for a neighborhood park in which they had to take stuff before the city council and make presentations to the park board. And they were out of the class. They were gone. But this was carried forth by the neighborhood commission and two years later they created the park based upon the designs of these students. And why it was important was it was a piece of very scenic land, highly developable, because it was on a hillside so you could look out across the town and water, highly developable land that was blocked from doing that as it became a neighborhood scenic park. Well, you can sort of shrug and say, big deal, but you couple that with other groups of students that have been involved with the organizing of neighborhood associations in town. We've had large numbers of solar greenhouse projects in the town involving things from women's only crew for construction, to doing this for low-income people. We've done numbers of these things. The Energy Outreach office which was designed for low-income, energy efficiency stuff was staffed by Evergreen students and graduates for eight years. Large numbers of pro-active kinds of things are going on.

There are a lot of really exciting things that are going on that in some sense transcend intellectual excitement because it is getting into an action excitement. I guess I'm biased, and not all faculty here would concur with my bias. Intellectual excitement is wonderful. That's why I got into this racket. Don't get me wrong but I would rather

see action than all the stimulating seminars in the world. I'd rather see a couple of people turned onto [working in] the soup kitchen downtown and get off their butts and do something than sit around and have all these wonderful discussions. And I'm the first to love great discussions. But I'm really biased toward people, citizens, getting involved in what I will call sort of a civic enterprise.

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