

*The Evergreen State College*  
*Office of the President - L 3109*

DATE: May 26, 1994

TO: Richard Cellarius, Sally Cloninger, Judy Cushing, Jin Darney, George Freeman, Jeanne Hahn (chair), Rob Knapp, Laurie Meeker, Raul Nakasone, Alice Nelson, Carol Minugh, Chuck Pailthorp, Willie Parson, Sara Rideout, Nancy Taylor, the new provost, Art Costantino, Shannon Ellis, Kitty Parker, Nina Powell, Arnaldo Rodriguez, Steve Hunter (staff), Jane Jervis, Pete Pietras, Wendy Sorrell, Mike Wark, Brian Coppedge and four other students to be appointed in September

FROM: Jane L. Jervis 

RE: Long Range Curriculum DTF

With gratitude to all of you for your willingness to participate in this most important task, I am pleased to appoint you to the Long Range Curriculum DTF. Jeanne Hahn, who ably chaired the Academic Programs/Student Affairs Subcommittee of the Long-Range Planning DTF, has agreed to chair, thus providing important continuity between the two efforts.

My task in giving a charge to this DTF is made immeasurably easier by the prior work of Jeanne's subcommittee and of the faculty retreats. The attached document (Charge to Long-Range Curriculum DTF) forms the backbone of that charge. Please read it carefully and critically. You will necessarily, as you work together, reshape and refine details of that document and, undoubtedly, new information from the external and internal environment will come to bear on your work. But the outline and general timetable of your task are there.

The charge asks you to be "broadly and frequently consultative" in your work, and suggests monthly work sessions with the faculty. I would like to expand that charge, and ask that you devise ways to be broadly and frequently consultative with students as well.

Jeanne has called the first meeting of the DTF:

**Monday June 13, 10 - 2, at the Organic Farm House**  
**A Working Potluck**

She says, "At that meeting we will review the Charge and the context on which it rests. From this review we will prioritize the DTF's work, establish the direction for a research agenda (some of this research will be conducted over the summer), and identify probable subcommittees. We will also set two additional dates for meetings to take place over the summer. This summer work will enable us to report to and consult with the Faculty in the week prior to the beginning of classes and to begin the academic year with a good head of steam. Please reread the Charge prior to our June 13 meeting."

I look forward to participating with you in this most important conversation about the future of the educational program at Evergreen.

## CHARGE TO LONG-RANGE CURRICULUM DTF

### Introduction:

We reached a widespread agreement at the February Faculty Retreat that the time for a fundamental rethinking of the curriculum -- its structure and content -- has arrived. Although there are a number of things we continue to do well and with great success, there was an interest and even enthusiasm for exploring a variety of ways of reconfiguring the curriculum to meet better both student and faculty needs.

In the short time available to it, the Academic Programs/Student Affairs subcommittee of the Long Range Planning DTF has assessed the outside environment, national trends, and a variety of data regarding factors internal to Evergreen. We are strongly convinced that (1) the curriculum needs full and fundamental reconsideration and (2) the time to do it is NOW. The following paragraphs provide a synopsis of the information/arguments that have led us to this conclusion.

First, there are a number of factors internal to the College which compel us to fundamental reconsideration. Briefly stated, the last Long Range Curriculum DTF completed its work in 1982 and the curricular structures and content designed then are, in numerous key aspects, no longer working. (For example, the entry level programs and curricular pathways which each Specialty Area agreed to provide no longer exist in several instances.) The 1986 Strategic Plan advanced a number of short-term suggestions regarding curriculum reform and called for a new LRC DTF. Few of the Plan's proposals were implemented, and the DTF was not charged. It is widely recognized among faculty, staff, and students that major elements of the curriculum are no longer serving us or our students well. There was ample testimony on this point at the Faculty Retreat. In addition to what we know from our experiences in the classroom, a large body of data underscores the need for change.

Second, there are a number of pressures from the larger state environment which, when taken together, compel the need for thoughtful justification of Evergreen's existence as a four-year liberal arts college with a distinctive approach to higher education and for the development of a curricular structure and content that demonstrates that justification.

Third, it is essential to recognize that Washington State is not alone in exhibiting these tendencies. National trends are emerging that suggest every state is subject to similar pressures, that these are long-term pressures, and that the climate for higher education is not likely to improve in the foreseeable future. A new austerity, based on a weak economy, constrained state budgets, and continued attempts at federal

deficit reduction, is expected to continue, suggesting that college funding problems are long-term and structural in nature. Restricted funding is likely to lead states to mandate changes in the nature of higher education; i.e., enrollment caps, a shift in the burden of educational cost from the state to those who can afford it, reduced access, new relationships between community and four-year colleges. A recent article (December 1993) by David W. Breneman of Harvard University, "Higher Education: On a Collision Course with New Realities," convincingly raises and documents these issues and discusses possible strategies for addressing them. [Copies of this article are available from the Provost's Office.]

Finally, in 1996 a new enrollment push from the high schools will begin. Enrollment projections suggest that growth may occur at rate of 50 students per year. At first blush, this may seem a nominal rate of growth. The longer term impact, however, is substantial. In fact, annual growth of a relatively small number of students is deceptive in that long-term impact is masked at the outset. We currently suffer from an erosion of financial support and quality through an increasing student/faculty ratio, due to a pattern of incremental enrollment growth funded at marginal cost. We will be expected to grow steadily, adding new students and new faculty at a constant rate and under tightened budgets. As the only campus in the state with a substantial portion of undeveloped acreage, it is not difficult to imagine that the College could be asked to expand its enrollment at an even higher rate. We cannot allow ourselves to be taken by surprise by these coming events.

#### THE CHARGE:

The charge to the Long-Range Curriculum DTF is to: (1) fundamentally reconsider the structure and content of the curriculum and recommend changes; (2) rethink the curriculum's interface with Student Affairs; (3) present, for faculty approval and adoption, a reformulated curricular design that looks forward to the realities and needs of the 21st century.

It is vital to our survival that prior to 1996 we have redesigned our curricular structures and content in such a way that they will (a) be sufficient to handle a steadily increasing number of students, (b) serve well a consciously determined mix of undergraduates, (c) speak to student needs as we enter the 21st century, (d) enable us to continue our educational practices and pedagogy in ways that make us distinctive and provide a model in higher education, and (e) meet the changing interests and needs of the faculty.

As instructed by the Faculty at the 27 April retreat, the DTF should be broadly and frequently consultative in its work.

For example, it was suggested that one Wednesday afternoon per month be set aside for faculty work sessions on previously announced aspects of its charge. Faculty at those meetings would act as a DTF of the whole, advising, commenting on, and instructing the DTF's work. It was further recommended that the DTF establish a number of sub-groups with specific research and/or conceptual tasks on which faculty who are not regular DTF members would serve for a short period of time. The DTF should structure its work in such a way that this agreed-upon goal of ongoing consultation is met.

The DTF should hold an initial meeting in the spring quarter and then begin its work in earnest in the fall. It should establish a working timetable that produces a draft report in January 1995 to be fully discussed by the faculty at its winter quarter retreat. The outcome of this retreat discussion should enable faculty to incorporate agreed-upon changes in its planning for the 1996-97 curriculum. A final report should be ready for discussion in the early spring, enabling the DTF to conclude its work by the end of the academic year. A Hiring Plan DTF should be charged as soon as the LRC DTF's work takes sufficient form and after the DTF's first draft report to the faculty has been fully discussed. The Hiring Plan DTF should have some overlapping membership with the LRC DTF.

#### Parameters:

While the DTF is charged to think widely and deeply about new structures and content, there are a number of established parameters that should guide its work:

Enrollment at the College will increase by approximately 1000 students by 2010.

The current faculty, its talents and abilities, should be an anchoring factor in curricular planning. Similarly, the built environment and current physical plant pose clear opportunities and limitations on curricular innovation.

Higher education will be subject to continued fiscal austerity through the decade (at least).

We must ensure predictability and continuity in curricular offerings with the flexibility and ability to respond quickly to exciting new ideas

The curriculum we design will retain a liberal arts emphasis and continue to serve a mix of lower division and upper division students.

### Key Questions to Consider:

While the following list is not intended to be exhaustive or foreclose other questions/issues, it contains key questions and issues that surfaced in a variety of forums including the Long-range planning process, the Faculty Retreat, and results of assessment work. The DTF should use these questions to guide its work.

#### DEFINING GOALS

1. What are the core values of the curriculum and how are those values manifest in faculty, students and graduates of the College?

2. Should we specialize in a small number of things we do very well and stop doing some things we do now, but not as well? Under the continuing austerity of the 1990s, is it possible to do the same with less or should we develop a more cohesive and focused curriculum that emphasizes a small number of areas?

3. What are the areas of distinction that currently exist in our curriculum. How can we enhance/build on them?

4. How do we insure that multicultural values, cultural differences, and diverse points of view are respected and represented throughout the curriculum?

#### EVALUATION

5. What are the criteria for evaluating the success or failure of the curriculum? Is the retention rate a useful measure of our effectiveness? What other measures, data, and non-quantitative methods might we use?

6. What will be the outcomes of the proposed curriculum? What do we expect students to take from Evergreen, and does the proposed curriculum provide for these outcomes?

#### ENROLLMENT SIZE AND MIX

7. Given that we will grow by 1000 students, what form should that growth take? (i.e., in increments of 50 or in larger chunks? in the graduate, undergraduate and/or weekend/evening programs?)

8. What are the enrollment trends in our feeder institutions? What are the educational needs and interests of high school and community college students? How can we anticipate new and changing needs and areas of curricular interest?

9. Should we design programs specifically as entry points for new transfer students? Should we develop strategies to ensure that entering transfer students possess the necessary skills to do upper division work?

10. What is the appropriate student mix (e.g., age, undergraduate/graduate, lower/upper division, full-time/part-time), and how do we achieve it?

#### CURRICULAR FORMS

11. What changes are needed in our freshman-level curriculum that will improve the quality of educational experiences for freshmen and, presumably, retention? How do we assure that there is rigor and coherence in Core? Are there more viable ways of organizing the first year curriculum? What are the core competencies that the first year curriculum should address and how do we measure them?

12. Some of our current Specialty Areas barely exist in print, much less as functioning components of the curriculum. Should we continue with Specialty Areas, with different Specialty Areas, or should we institute an entirely new curricular organization?

13. What does it mean for a faculty member to belong to a Specialty Area or a curricular grouping?

14. How can we incorporate changing technologies into the curriculum? The DTF should assess the implementation of technology across the curriculum as well as its importance as both a subject and a set of core skills in the curriculum. How can emerging technologies be utilized as learning tools?

15. What is the role of graduate education at Evergreen? In what ways could undergraduate students benefit from the existence of graduate programs? What does having graduate programs mean both in terms of opportunities and obligations for the faculty?

16. How can we provide increased curricular options? Should the curriculum contain a mix of curricular options, allowing more choice points for students? How would we articulate a mix of options including full-time, 16 quarter hour programs, 12-4 designs, large lecture courses, etc.?

17. What will be the interface between the full-time, day-on-campus curriculum and part-time and evening studies? What is the relationship between hiring evening/weekend faculty and day-time faculty? (This question should be investigated in conjunction with the Hiring Plan DTF.)

18. How do we plan for/utilize the changing skills and interests of the faculty as we age?

#### CURRICULAR CONTENT

19. Should we institute a summative senior evaluation for all graduating students? How would this solidify and focus an undergraduate education? Should we institute a senior thesis/project as a graduation requirement?

20. Should we institute a mandatory upper division qualifying exam in areas judged appropriate by the faculty? If so, what implications would such an exam hold for our curriculum?

21. How is student progress from entry-level to intermediate- to advanced-level work attended to?

22. Are there particular skills/competencies that should be developed across the curriculum; i.e., writing, media, foreign language, emerging technologies, math?

23. As global issues become increasingly important to daily life, what role should international studies play in our curriculum?

24. What should be the role of individual contracts and internships in an undergraduate education? What should be the role of "service learning" (community service) in our curriculum?

25. What curricular areas need developmental sequences? How do we insure they are provided?

#### STUDENT AFFAIRS INTERFACE

26. How can the faculty involve students in curriculum planning in a meaningful way? What role can student affairs play in this process?

27. How can we rethink the interface between Academic Advising and the academic programs? How can we develop closer cooperation between Student Affairs and the academic programs on issues such as retention, academic advising, remedial work, etc.

#### Critical Documents to be Consulted:

The following documents should be reviewed and responded to as deemed necessary:

The 1989 Accreditation Report;

The 1986 Strategic Plan, chapter on Reconfiguration of the Curriculum;

The strategic statements with curricular implications in the four subcommittee reports of the 1994 Long-Range Planning document.

The subcommittee reports of the 1994 Long-Range Planning DTF

Additional documents, both internal and external to the College, should be reviewed as needed.