

DATE: November 28, 1963
 TO: All Faculty
 FROM: Patrick J. Hill *Patrick J. Hill*
 RE: Wednesday's faculty meeting

The Board of Trustees, after two open meetings and after lengthy consultations with Dick Schwartz and me, voted unanimously at its November 10 meeting to return the newly proposed affirmative action policy to the campus for further consideration and major revisions.

Included among the major revisions is the request for linkage of affirmative action policy to (inter)cultural literacy in our curriculum. I informed the Agenda Committee of this development and of the Board's request that we present them at their December 15 meeting with our time-frame for response. Recognizing the importance and the complexity of the situation, the Agenda Committee requested that I circulate a memo prior to Wednesday's meeting. A half-hour has been allocated for this discussion.

Why did the Board of Trustees vote to return the proposal policy for revision? Some of the reasons, as you will see, are not direct commentaries upon the policy as upon its adequacy to our particular situation. The reasons, in what I perceived to be the order of seriousness, are as follows:

1. Substantial evidence that many faculty were unaware of the proposed new policy and its implications, particularly for training and evaluation.
2. Inadequate training procedures. The focus on once-a-year events is particularly troublesome to the Board.
3. Inadequate evaluation procedures. Failure to reach goals or to show improvement does not seem to have significant consequences.
4. Poorly conceived and designated lines of responsibility for implementation of policies.
5. Lack of significant progress, unaddressed by the proposed policy, in reaching hiring goals in faculty and professional staff.
6. Continuing reports--corroborated by persons in responsible positions--of insensitivity on the part of some Evergreen faculty to the needs and interests of students of color. At two open meetings of the Board, students of color spoke of the insensitivity of some un-named Evergreen faculty.

1. This is my second lengthy memorandum to the faculty in less than three weeks. I know how negatively many of you feel about memoranda of any length. But I also know how you feel about oral memoranda. While promising to reassess my mode of communication, for the moment I am relying on this means. It enables me to place issues before the whole faculty and, to the extent that you continue to provide me with thoughtful responses, develop a comprehensive understanding of Evergreen.

7. Too heavy a burden placed on students--usually students of color--for reporting and following up on alleged instances of faculty insensitivity or bias. Students who spoke at the Trustees meetings left the impression that they run too great a risk to complain about the faculty.

8. More generally, lack of safeguards for the complaining party, especially when the complaint is against one's supervisor.

9. Inadequate budgets for recruitment and training.

10. Increasing sadness, perhaps even bitterness on the part of many faculty and staff of color about Evergreen.

11. Lingering uncertainty about the seriousness of Evergreen's commitments to affirmative action and (inter)cultural literacy.

Much of the formal and informal discussions of the Board concerning our proposed affirmative action policy centered on a single, central paragraph which needs to be brought to your attention:

"WAC 174-109-200 Training

Recognizing the discriminatory attitudes are historical and systemic, members of the College workforce will participate in Affirmative Action seminars or training sessions at least once annually, and this participation will be noted during the evaluation process. The purpose of this training will be to increase cross and intra-cultural communication and understanding. The training will include off-campus as well as internal resources, will touch on a variety of issues of interest to all protected groups, and will be reviewed for effectiveness by the Affirmative Action Committee."

This paragraph, it should be noted, was part of the document circulated by Rebecca Wright to all of you last spring and discussed at a faculty meeting in April. While strikingly strong in some respects, e.g. its declaration that we must all participate in training seminars, the paragraph with its once-a-year approach and its tame follow-through seemed to crystallize Evergreen's half-heartedness about affirmative action. Discussion of the paragraph, coinciding as it did with the showing of "American Pictures" (which seemed to some so worthwhile as to merit the request that I or the Board mandate faculty attendance, and to others so inappropriate that they characterized it as self-defeating) clarified the need for a more thorough discussion of training.

What is the link to (inter)cultural literacy and to the curriculum? Some of the complaints of students of color were directly about the curriculum. They observed, as blacks did in the sixties with reference to prime-time programs on television, that they do not see themselves or their experience reflected therein. They said that their attempts to get the faculty to change were unresponsively met; and (as previously noted) that they did not feel sufficiently safeguarded to use normal channels to bring grievances against their teachers. The Board responded by saying that a revised affirmative action policy should directly address the rights of students in such situations and that the curriculum

should be modified in some fashion so as to reflect more directly Evergreen's commitment to (inter)cultural literacy.

II

Your chairperson requested, in addition to explaining the issues, that I make recommendations for procedures that the faculty can vote on. I will make some recommendations—fairly minor ones—at the conclusion of this memo. But I am cautious about more substantive recommendations. For two reasons: I don't understand the situation well enough and thus need considerably more information; and secondly, these recommendations, in order to be acceptable to the Board, will significantly implicate everyone and thus require consulting with everyone.

Let me share some impressions with you for the sake of getting feedback and further information: As I have talked with various people about the problem, I notice that no-one seems to deny the facts. The interpretations and the definition of the problem, however, differ widely revealing significantly unshared perceptions and even purposes:

1. The problem is greatly exaggerated. The Evergreen faculty is quite responsive and the curriculum is shot through with multi-cultural perspectives. Maybe they are not visible enough or perhaps their appearance depends too much on shifting faculty interests. But this is not a racist or insensitive faculty.

2. Our goals are unrealistic. How in the world could we have ever expected to have 25 percent minority faculty. If we would just lower our goals and admit that we are doing as well as anyone else in Washington, we could stop feeling guilty.

3. Our Tacoma campus and our Native American Studies program have high percentages of Third World students and faculty. Additionally, 31 percent of our regular faculty are women. Why do we have to do more?

4. Our Tacoma campus and our Native American programs are compartmentalized (not to say "segregated"). These two efforts have lessened the need for us to think about an intercultural curriculum in much the same way that English departments and writing clinics remove the need for faculty in a traditional university to be concerned about writing skills.

5. The problem is Olympia, not Evergreen. Were we located in Tacoma or Seattle, we might entertain some ambitious multi-cultural goals.

6. The problem is localized in our Core programs. The curriculum is much more responsive and individualized as the student progresses. If we could differentiate our Core programs slightly, much of the problem would be removed.

7. Our salary scale is too low to attract Third World academics in the areas where we need to hire. They are too much in demand.

8. We are indeed not serious about our affirmative action goals. Those goals are liberal rhetoric.

9. If we are serious, we have been terribly inept at pursuing the goals.

10. When the college was expanding rapidly, we might have been serious about the goals. But now an energetic pursuit of those goals--barring an unlikely influx of megabucks--may mean bumping other people out of their jobs or anticipated jobs.

11. The isolation and marginality experienced by people of color on this campus is a more acute form of the problem we all face here. The socio-academic structures foster isolation. Only a nomad would be completely comfortable here.

12. We are not an oasis from the racism of American society. Our racism is not of the KKK variety. It is more subtle. Perhaps "benign neglect" or (as it was recently phrased to me) "passive malevolence" describes our attitude. If we fail to admit this, we'll be deceiving ourselves and evolving inappropriate strategies.

I would not be surprised to learn that there is some truth in each of these dozen interpretations, even the most self-ingratiating and the most impalatable. For the sake of your providing me with feedback as to how to proceed, let me choose just one of the analyses, one which I believe contains a great deal of neglected merit. My choice of just one analysis ought in no way to suggest that I do not want to hear your feedback about the other proposed analyses. As a matter of fact, the exploration of the merit of each of the interpretations might be a fine starting point for devising a comprehensive response.

I wish to explore a suggestive parallel. At many traditional colleges and universities, there is a genuine and almost universal commitment to the importance of writing skills. Professors deplore the absence of these skills and periodically urge the administration and the English department to do something about it. But as individuals they are not willing to do something about it. They are not willing because a) their first commitment is to the subject matter which they love; b) they themselves, while thinking that it is terribly important that writing be taught, do not want to teach it; and c) they would like to believe that they are teaching at an institution where it is not necessary to teach writing.

How close is that analogy to our own situation? I know a significant number of TESOL teachers for whom it is not true, so primary is their commitment to intercultural literacy. And there may be others for whom the explanation is too generous. But there are not enough of either of those types to explain the phenomena. A good part of the explanation is to be made in terms of our greater absorption as individuals in worthwhile commitments other than an

intercultural curriculum and affirmative action. It's not that we don't want Evergreen to be more culturally diverse, nor that we oppose the evolution of a pioneering intercultural/national curriculum. It's just that we wish that persons other than ourselves would take the responsibility for making that happen.

I know this analysis is not exhaustive. But to the extent that it is capable of explaining a substantial part of the phenomena, a direction for response is clear: those of us for whom the commitment to (inter)cultural literacy is primary or near primary must work together to create more visible and regular and pervasive intercultural dimensions in the curriculum; and those of us for whom the commitment is important but not primary must understand that as individuals we must take regular turns--much as we take turns in Core programs or on major DTF's--to effect some realization of our goals. We will not make any progress unless we realize that our support of liberal goals is empty unless backed by each individual's willingness to provide support with his/her own efforts.

One last thought on the linkage of affirmative action and curriculum: I could understand if some of you are not thrilled to learn of this linkage. For one thing, you might say, after the past two years, the last thing in the world we want to talk about is curriculum. Secondly, as much as we've talked about it, we are by no means clear what we mean by cultural literacy. For my part, however, I welcome the linkage. I welcome it not only because I am interested in intercultural and global education, as many of you are. I welcome it moreso because it creates a context within which an Affirmative Action policy might be realistically pursued. Without some link to some routine and everyday activities of an institution, affirmative action remains abstract and legalistic. With this curricular link, understanding persons of color and of other cultures becomes a part of what we as an institution are doing in our everyday business. We still suffer the enormous limitation of not having enough persons of color, but we will at least have moved away from the ineffective once-a-year approach.

Additionally, the linkage to curriculum places the issue at the center of the institutions concerns. Affirmative action without such linkage to mainstream activities is often treated as if it were a troublesome problem created by bureaucratic regulations and lacking real intellectual content. I cannot respond more forcefully to the inadequacies of such a conception than did one of our own black faculty. Writing in 1979, he said,

"Serious difficulties remain in developing programs and educational opportunities within our regular programs that address Third World issues and concerns. It needs to be made crystal clear that this constitutes no special favor to non-whites but deals with some of the most fundamental problems and conflicts of global society, bearing on the very survival of us all. Beyond polite discussions of 'cultural awareness,' in-service training needs to address the economic, political, and cultural problems, local, national, and international, that turn essentially on the relationships between Third World peoples and the highly industrialized nations. These issues should no longer be permitted to remain as incidental or second-thought inclusions into our regular program planning. Improving the head count of non-white faculty should do something to help here, but not inevitably.

Improved program designs will."²

What steps should we take now? A few things are already clear:

1. Immediately, we need to report back to the Board of Trustees on our time-frame for dealing with these issues. I need this information for the December 15 Board meeting. I think a response by March or April at the latest (giving the Board time to respond to us before we break for the summer) is feasible.

2. We need to create a DTF to rework the Affirmative Action Policy. A great deal of the reworking can be done in a few meetings with Dick Schwartz, Stone Thomas, Rebecca Wright and myself--we know what the shortcomings are. One major task of this DTF will be that of consulting with every unit and perhaps every person on campus. Does each person know what the policy is, that it means something for each of them and that there are consequences for non-compliance?

It should be noted that this task of consulting and communication is not an easy one. Rebecca Wright devoted a great deal of time last year to such an effort. The DTF will need to evolve effective means of reaching every person.

3. A second major task of the DTF, one that will require our best and most creative thinking, is the construction of a more adequate training policy. The policy should be tailored for each unit.

When it comes to faculty training, the issues become complex. My disposition is to conceive such training over the longrun in terms of a developmental dimension with our curriculum.

4. There are ways of conceiving a linkage between affirmative action and curriculum that most of us would find odious and pedagogically destructive. There are ways of conceiving the linkage that would be exciting and intellectually respectable, but unabsorbable into the intellectual and organizational patterns of Evergreen. We need something tailored to our particular situation. One crucial element of our particular situation, namely your response to this memorandum, remains unknown. Hence, though brimming with ideas which are appropriate to this degree of cooperation and flexibility, I am presently unable to put forth concrete suggestions. When I have a sense of where the faculty stands, the Deans and I and the DTF will float appropriate suggestions.

Please come to the faculty meeting on Wednesday. If you cannot come, please speak to one of the Deans or drop a note to me or to Betty Ruth Estes.

2. Some of you may wish to raise a different question about the Board's linkage. Isn't the curriculum the province of the faculty? Not entirely. It is the Board's responsibility to make policy for the college and the law clearly includes the curriculum as part of that responsibility. We are by no means in a situation of confrontation or hostility with our Board. Nothing could be further from the truth. But we should all understand that were we to be unresponsive to their directives, it is they and not we with whom the ultimate responsibility rests: ". . . the Board of Trustees of The Evergreen State College with the assistance of the faculty of the state college shall prescribe the course of study in the various schools and departments thereof and publish such catalogues thereof as the Board deems necessary."