May 13, 1985

TO: All Faculty

FROM: Basic Skills Study Group via Betsy Diffendal and Steve Hunter

RE: Revised Draft Proposal and Recommendations of Basic Skills Study Group

As you may recall, this time last year the Basic Skills Study Group prepared a report for faculty discussion on how to credit precollege work in reading, writing and math. This discussion led us to think through the recommendations,to meet further with the Financial Aid and the V.A. offices and to contact other Washington four year colleges about their approaches to crediting precollege work.

As a result of those conversations we are bringing back the following policy statement for approval of the faculty at the May 22 meeting. We then will forward the other implemenation recommendations to the Provost along with the added recommendation that he assemble an implementation task force next year anticipating Fall, 1986 implementation.

The background and specific recommendations of the study group are attached here as Appendix I. The following policy statement, if approved, would be included in the 1986-87 catalogue and would guide next year's implementation planning:

Policy Statement for Adoption by the Faculty:

The study group recommends that the College should include an academic policy statement about the status of precollege level work in its catalogue for 1986-87:

Demonstration of Basic Academic Skills

Students must demonstrate proficiency in writing, reading and computation to a minimum standard established by the faculty or the credit will be recorded in the transcript as "pre-college" credit and will not count toward the 180 quarter hours required for graduation.

BD/SH:st

THE PROBLEM:

A portion of Evergreen's students are unable to do college level reading and writing at entry. That proportion may be as high as 25% of the entering class. A larger proportion of our entering class is unable to do college level math. The Council for Postsecondary Education has ruled that four-year institutions cannot award credit for precollege level work which will apply toward graduation. At present, when precollege math, reading or writing skills development is done either within programs or within the LRC or Math SPLU lab, there is no transcript indication that the work is "precollege level." It is credited toward the 180 total credit hours required to graduate. To the extent that students earn credit at Evergreen for precollege level work and apply it toward graduation, we are at variance with CPE policy. Both nationwide and local assessments show a decline in the average ability of entering college students to read and write. At Evergreen, where students are asked to engage in a richer range of assignments than the typical college student, long-lasting basic skills deficiencies threaten the prospect of intermediate and advanced work. This study group was asked to propose an institutional policy in response to the CPE directive and to suggest strate-gies which would focus additional institutional attention on the development of basic skills.

DEFINITIONS:

The study group has defined college level skills in reading and writing as the ability to read and comprehend text materials with an adequacy to allow organization and presentation of analytic essays and ideas in seminars, and, the ability to write coherent paragraphs.

The study group has defined college level work in math as intermediate algebra and beyond.

Operationally, these abilities can be defined by performance on a diag-nostic instrument and through assessment by faculty.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Policy Recommendations**

The study group recommends that:

(a) Students whose work in reading and writing is not at the college level as defined above will be awarded credit for basic skills development which will not count toward the 180 quarter hours required for graduation. This stipulation will not interfere with the full-time status of students nor the awarding of financial aid, since it will be credited in the student transcript.

Credit earned by students in "arithmetic" or "introduction to algebra" also will not count toward the 180 quarter hours required for graduation;
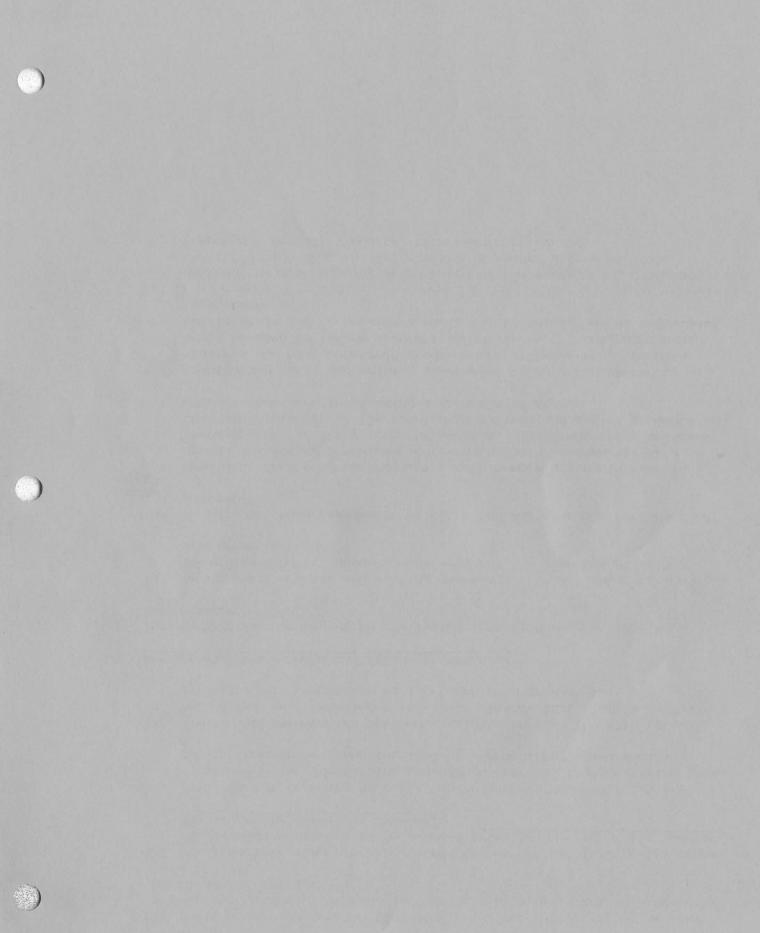
(b)   Faculty are responsible for identifying precollege credit awarded through academic programs and for listing appropriate equivalencies in the transcript;

(c)   Students receiving precollege credits must be notified of the number of precollege credits to be awarded <u>prior to the end of the quarter for which the credit is awarded</u>;

(d)   Staff in the Learning Resource Center and the Math SPLU Lab are responsible for identifying precollege credits, for specifying this in the description, and for listing appropriate equivalencies;

(e)   Precollege mathematics options available through the SPLU Lab will be labeled as "Precollege" and state clearly that credits earned through their completion will not apply to graduation;

II.   <u>Recommended Assessments and Follow-Up Measures</u>

The study group recommends the following types and·uses of skills assessments:

(a)   An optional reading and writing assessment for all entering students to inform faculty, academic advisers and the students of skills proficiencies; and

(b)   An optional math assessment at entry for all students for identical purposes.

(c)   Specialty Area programs requiring math competency would have the option of listing a minimum score on the math assessments as a prerequisite for entry into the program. The study group believes this would clarify skills-level expectations and assist students and academic advisers in planning a sequence of study.

(d)   A uniform reading and writing assessment to be administered to all students who have earned 48 credit hours at Evergreen. Results would be used to inform students and advisers of continuing basic skills needs and to provide a basis for the design of an individual improvement plan.

No required math testing is proposed by the study group. If the faculty decide that the College should ensure a level of math competency for all students, this should be reused.