RESPONSE TO THE FACULTY EVALUATION DOCUMENT, 5 NOVEMBER 1986

Burton S. Guttman

I want to begin with two small, but important, complaints. First, the word "faculty" is a collective noun meaning all the individuals who teach at a college; you continually use the word as if it were equivalent to "faculty member." It is not. I'm sick of this jargon that seems to make the individual the whole collection. Please stop it.

Second, too much of this memo is written in a kind of educationese or bureaucratese. You can edit a lot of this to make the language simple and direct.

In general, I applaud your work and suggestions about separating development from reappointment. What I present here is a strongly worded statement supporting this separation and rebutting reactionary forces opposing separation. I beg you to listen carefully to what I am saying. You must see that what I am arguing against--what I call the Received View--is a particularly narrow, unrealistic view of the entire College; and by expecting everyone else to conform to it, the proponents of the Received View are opposing any kind of realistic development in which □4most□5 faculty members can participate. Anyone who thinks faculty development can be equated with the activities of team teaching in coordinat1ed studies is sadly tunnel-visioned.

The Received View arose by outmerving Merv. Merv Cadwallader proposed coordinated studies programs as only one of several elements that might be incorporated into the new college. But it was taken up by some members of the planning faculty and made into the center of the College. The Received View is that team teaching in coordinated studies programs is the most important thing we do here, and that it is a sufficient intellectual activity for all faculty members.

I find the Received View among the statements in opposition, p. 3, and among the proposals on p. 4 that we only have to continue to use the present system. Let me say, incidentally, that I see most of the suggestions (pp. 4-7) as alternatives that can coexist. There is no reason to see these as exclusives, as all-or-none choices. Several of these ideas may be incorporated simultaneously into a good development program.

But I want to address the Received View. This proposal is actually a denial of the separation of development and evaluation. It is a proposal to stick to a status quo that has failed. I deny what it states is a "bottom line"--that we have less dead wood here than other colleges. The crisis your committee is addressing is the failure of the evaluation system; and part of that failure is

to allow people to remain on the faculty who may be adequate teachers but have little or no intellectual vigor.

I maintain that it rests on a fallacy expressed in the first sentence of the second idea: that development is primarily built into interdisciplinary programs, faculty seminars, and colleagial evaluation. This represents a narrow, unrealistic conception of development. True development is primarily the expansion of the intellect; and this is a personal business that must take place from a foundation of some internal agenda and over a long time. A person'sÜj□□□□□□Ü
participation in coordinated studies programs rarely permits a continuous development of ideas that are personally important to him or her. One may learn to teach better--and that's important. One may become more liberally educated--and that's important. But the system we've been working under all these years stifles true development by pretending that all one needs is a faculty seminar and an interesting program. It is naive, stupid, shortsighted, and dangerous to believe that engaging in faculty seminars over ideas that can enlighten freshmen in Core Programs is going to nurture and stimulate the minds of scholars who are 25 years beyond graduate school.

Ã□2"ÃAN EVERGREEN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY*ƒ*

Evergreen was founded by some farsighted, imaginative people. They were followed, over the next few years, by a larger group who were able to pick up the original vision, expand it, and implement it. I feel proud to count myself among the latter group. We all came with assorted dreams of how higher education might be improved and saved from its own shortcomings. We also came with assorted histories of rebelliousness. We had almost all been mavericks of some kind where we were. And while we all had ideas about positive innovations, we were determined about certain negatives: we would ban certain features of the old system--such as tenure, grades and departments--that had caused obvious problems. Thus, Evergreen was founded, and defined, largely by negatives: what we did ”not• have. To our credit, it also had, or acquired, enough positive features to make it sufficiently different in a viable way.

The founders and first builders of the College are aging. Many are nearing retirement. As the College grows, and as older people are replaced, much younger faculty members are becoming more prominent. And even if the new hires are well beyond their graduate work, they all come with agendas and concerns of their own.

They come without some old hangups. Principles that motivated passionate--and seemingly endless--discussions in the early years are now either incorporated into the College structure or are largely unimportant to the newcomers. With fresh eyes, our newer colleagues tell us that things we have often felt so important to us are, in fact, not very important. Instead, they point out the features that they see as outstanding: the active involvement of students in

their own learning, for instance. And the newcomers are eager to come here not out of some rebelliousness but simply to join a successful enterprise and do very well, and with special freedom, what is closest to their hearts.

In seeking and accepting employment at Evergreen, these faculty members have bought into certain general ideas. They are selected for, among other things, a certain emphasis on interdisciplinary study and teaching. In a world of sometimes narrow specialization, this is certainly a special value of Evergreen, and a major contribution it has to make to American education. But there is, in addition, a special emphasis on the particular subjects in which they have been trained. In the early days of Evergreen, "co-learner" was a byword. We all taught in coordinated studies programs where we assumed roles of pseudoexpertise with the excuse that we were learning the subject along with the students. Even in those days, there as considerable impatience with this idea among the students; they had come here to learn from us, not merely to work alongside us as we struggled with new ideas. They wanted to be helped through difficult ideas by people who already understood those ideas and could help them develop their own insights. Co-learning, gratefully, has become almost forgotten.Üj□□□□□□ÜŒ Which is not to say that we don't learn from one another. In coordinated studies over the years, I have read fascinating books, engaged in interesting discussions, developed new insights, and have generally become a more liberally, usefully educated person. I have helped students learn while I learned myself. But I was primarily useful in these programs by virtue of what I already knew and could develop further. And, in spite of what I learned about literature from Peter Elbow, I wouldn't dare be the primary litterateur in a future program.

Teaching with other people in most coordinated studies programs is fun and enlightening. The programs, done properly, are excellent for the students, so we are serving education well by doing them. But they do not constitute real faculty development. Most of us once bought the idea that we could get our intellectual kicks solely by collaborative, interdisciplinary teaching. Many people still think so. But they are being outnumbered, and they will soon be replaced.

The long list of faculty members engaged in seriously scholarly and scientific research, or artistic creation, demonstrates how many of us need something more than teaching in coordinated studies programs to exercise our intellects and develop ourselves as individuals. And it is among our newer colleagues that I find particular emphasis on such development. These are people with intellectual agendas of their own who need to continue pursuing their own studies; and they make us a stronger, more interesting faculty by doing so.

Furthermore, they are more in tune with students' needs and demands by virtue of these agendas. They particularly emphasize the need for students to have strong foundations in the basics before moving into advanced programs. And they are also prime movers toward the advanced programs that students have long demanded

but have often found missing here (much to our sorrow, as our excellent seniors have left for colleges with more complete curricula).

But, then, where is the peculiar virtue we have long contended exists in interdisciplination? Will we lose that emphasis, or relegate it only to the Core Programs? I think that we are now finding where real interdisciplination lies. The proper metaphor arose jokingly in an STH meeting a few days ago: the one-person coordinated study. The ideal Evergreen faculty member ought to be a person capable of teaching one-person coordinated studies, and who is also developing (out of his personal agenda) the material to teach in them. I would not venture to explain what complex of ideas folks like Rob Knapp and Byron Youtz are developing in the Physical Systems program; but such programs are interdisciplinary coordinated studies in the best sense, even if only one person is actually teaching them. These folks are exploring new ideas, lying on the borders between physics and other topics, or utilizing extensions of physics analysis; but they are developing these ideas out of their own natural interests. I would love to teach such a program in some topics in philosophy and science; and if I did so, it would be a development out of my own intellect, and something of prime interest to me. Now I think it becomes obvious that ”true• faculty development is largely this kind of agenda, and not merely doing another Core Program or improving one's lecturing style.

There are a few people who manage to find enough intellectual stimulation in the programs they create to pursue their own agendas and even to write books based on what they develop. (To be blunt, Richard Jones is a prime example; and it doesÜj□□□□□□Ü
not surprise me that we get this document with Richard as one of its authors.) But such people are few and far between. And it would be a disservice to the rest of the College to propose a "development" program based on the premise that everyone can do this. I certainly cannot do it in molecular genetics, or in the philosophy of biology--the areas where I wish to develop my intellect. My survey of faculty research interests tells me that few faculty members could do it realistically. A development plan for the whole faculty must recognize this reality, or it will be a sham.