

to pres McCann
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Faculty Task Force
INTERIM REPORT; TASK FORCE ON
COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

In carrying out its original charge, the task force has (a) conducted a study of catalogs of 24 of the state's community colleges, (b) reviewed the published goal statements of Evergreen College, (c) reviewed the Council on Higher Education's Enrollment Policies for Higher Education position paper, and (c) conducted an interview with Mr. Gilbert Carbone of the State Board for Community College Education. In order to complete its charge, the task force will want to investigate further certain practices at a few of the community colleges--including experimental programs--and review the outcomes of the January 27 meeting of the Inter-college Relations Commission, which Will Humphreys will attend. The task force also will need to formulate recommendations on programs (if any) which Evergreen needs to set up in order to deal with the problems of students transferring into Evergreen from the community colleges.

I. Goals and Objectives. The faculty and academic deans, by virtue of their expressed desire to maintain a low student-faculty ratio (20:1) in lower division offerings of Evergreen, are committed to the idea that a primary commitment of the college must be the teaching of first-time, freshman students. This goal is parallel to one of the consistently-expressed goals of the state's community colleges. It is, however, in considerable tension with publicly expressed goals of Evergreen and of the Council on Higher Education. According to President McCann, "It will be necessary--no, essential--to phase in community college transfers, and, in the future, in probably far larger number than those who begin college at Evergreen."¹ This statement, made in February of 1970, envisions Evergreen as being, in the long run, an upper-division and--perhaps--graduate institution. It is quite consistent with the goals expressed by the Council on Higher Education in November of 1970 when it urged that "the four-year institutions consider undergraduate class mix and quotas as are necessary to reflect the . . . priorities:

"1. Junior transfers from community colleges

"2. First time freshmen

"3. Other undergraduate transfers. . ."²

In short, the public posture of Evergreen and of the Council on Higher Education is that the four-year institutions should be primarily concerned with the upper division curriculum and that "the community college system should become the primary agent for lower division classes."³ In this light, it seems very significant that Evergreen's enrollment plans for 1971-72 call for approximately 200-300 community college transfer admissions when in February of 1970 President McCann expressed the belief that it would be wisest for Evergreen to avoid admitting any transfers in the first year of operation.⁴

It seems probable to the task force that Evergreen's faculty, for the foreseeable future, will stand opposed to this ordering of priorities, favoring --essentially--a reversal of the first two items suggested above in the statement from the Council on Higher Education. Evergreen's curricular design will probably have to be radically changed to accommodate a shift to upper-division-only (or upper-division-mostly) enrollment. Furthermore, the extremely conventional and non-experimental nature of the community college lower division, liberal arts programs--discussed in greater detail below--provides a good argument to support the position that Evergreen should not abandon lower-division education to those schools. Finally, it should be noted that the community colleges themselves are unwilling or, at least, hesitant to take on that burden. Presently they find

themselves torn among the conflicting goals of lower-division liberal arts education, completely open enrollment, and a "policy to increase the proportion of vocational-technical enrollment in comparison to the college transfer program."⁵ Clearly, it is the young people of the State of Washington who stand to suffer if the four-year colleges, and Evergreen in particular, choose to turn them toward an over-burdened community college system which is caught in a cleft-stick of conflicting expectations.

II. The Community Colleges: Common Patterns. There is wide diversity in the kinds of programs available to students at the state's community colleges, reflecting the diversity of goals for which the community colleges have been created. Generally, however, it is possible to separate the course offerings meaningfully into several categories: college transfer courses aimed at preparing students to go on at a four-year institution to the baccalaureate degree; vocational courses designed to teach such trades as data processing, tool and die making, office management, early childhood education, aircraft repair and maintenance, etc.; high school equivalency and other adult remedial education; and hobby or special interest classes. In general, though not universally, these different categories are represented in the community college catalog by the course numbering system: the first type of course is usually given a number between 100 and 300, the second type a number between 50 and 99, and the third and fourth types are numbered between 1 and 49. It should be stressed, however, that there are wide discrepancies in practice between one community college and another in this matter. At least one college, for example, numbers all courses from 100 onward and indicates the general type of course by code letters indicated the type of degree the course may count toward. Moreover, there are numerous examples of vocational courses being numbered above 100 and even a few cases where apparently equivalent courses are numbered below 100 at one college and above 100 elsewhere.⁷ Thus, a simple policy of giving full transfer credit for "courses above the 100 level" can result in students from one community college being given credit for work which is not accepted for credit from other institutions. A policy of accepting "all credits earned at accredited community colleges", on the other hand, results in the granting of credit for such things as high school--and even elementary school--remedial work. A policy of accepting all work numbered 50 or above seems fairly self-consistent. But it does raise serious questions in the case of students who have done virtually all of their work in 50-99 level vocational courses, since such persons may be utterly unprepared for upper-division college work. In any event, the task force does not believe that Evergreen's policy on transfer credit can or should be based on the course numbering system as such.

The types of degrees and certification which the community colleges offer is likewise subject to great diversity and bewildering conflicts in nomenclature. The following table summarizes the most commonly accepted patterns. It must be borne in mind, however, that while 90 credits with a 2.0 GPA is almost universally accepted around the state, the methods of calculating GPA differ so much from one institution to another that it is difficult to say what this "standard" represents. Also, there are important variations in "distribution requirements" for each of the degree programs and differences in ways of classifying what counts as "liberal arts" (many schools, for example, classifying nursing under natural science, others listing it as vocational or VoTech).

COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEGREE PATTERNS

Associate in Arts
Associate in Science
Associate in Arts and
Sciences

Generally require 90 quarter credits with 2.0 GPA. Usually includes only courses numbered over 100 which are usually labeled as "transfer" courses but which are sometimes vocational or technical. In varying amounts, vocational and technical courses can be used to satisfy AA requirements. In many schools, none can be used. On the average, AA and AS degrees are "high quality" (not taking into account matters of content and teaching).

Associate (or Certificate)
in General Studies

Generally requires 90 credits or "equivalent." Ranges from highly vocational-technical to being a "consolation prize" for students who do not meet distribution or grade point requirements for an AA or AS degree. In general, the general education requirement for this degree is "Communication." It could conceivably be the vehicle for experimental programs in the community colleges but this does not presently appear to be the case. Not offered at many institutions.

Associate in Applied Arts
Associate in Applied Science

The vocational, terminal degree. Usually requires 90 hours, 2.0 GPA with heavy vocational emphasis typical. Some schools require as much as 45 of the 90 hours be in "approved technical or vocational course work." Some schools require general education work with the vocational, but never more than 20 or 25 hours. Included here are some programs in job apprenticeship, law enforcement, fire command, etc., with as many as 30 or more credits being given for work experience.

Diplomas/Certificates in
various short and long
term technological pro-
grams

Purely technical and occupational. Sometimes count toward AAA or AAS degree.

A very few institutions also offer high school diplomas and elementary school certificates for adults.

There is, at present, considerable pressure to "standardize" the Associate of Arts degree in such a way as to facilitate the two-year colleges' taking over the responsibility of lower division education. According to information the task force has in hand, it appears quite likely that some such standardization will be effected in the near future. We expect to see agreement on the 90 credit, 2.0 GPA, requirements and perhaps on a distribution scheme which would require about two-thirds of the student's work for the AA to be in "Natural Science, Social Science, Humanities, and Communication." But there is not much likelihood that standardization will be achieved in fixing what gets called by these names, nor that a common grading system will be effected statewide. It is evidently a matter of considerable political delicacy within the community colleges how the divisional alignments are arranged and there is apparently some controversy about grading systems. (At least two of the state's institutions--both in "candidate" status for accreditation--have grading systems in which a student can only evidently fail a course by getting a D and having one point added into his GPA calculation.⁸ The task force intends to look further into this issue to determine whether this innovation has been undertaken for some particular reason of educational philosophy or whether it is, as it appears, merely an attempt to cut attrition rates by passing everyone.)

Despite lack of "real" standardization, the task force still feels that it is appropriate now and for the future for Evergreen to accept into junior status students who have successfully completed Associate in Arts/Sciences degrees at one of the community colleges. These students will generally have shown some degree of aptitude for and interest in liberal arts work and should be assimilable into Evergreen's "advanced" coordinated studies or contracted studies. If they are admitted in such numbers as to become the dominant group among Evergreen students, however, we can foresee some difficulty in keeping Evergreen's innovative approach intact. For the AA degree pattern is, at best, an imitation of the first two years of the "standard" university, liberal arts curriculum and if most Evergreen students have developed their expectations about college in that context it may be very difficult to create and guide a new set of expectations in two short years at Evergreen. To take only one example: the community colleges follow the pattern of large enrollment in lower division classes, leading to an expectation that more teacher contact with students will take place after transfer. Evergreen, however, is committed to a "level enrollment" over the four years, so that transfer students may well find themselves in larger seminars, etc., at Evergreen than at one of the other four year schools.

The task force, therefore, plans to recommend that Evergreen accept at full credit the AA degree (and its equivalents) and work done in course toward that degree (assuming a minimum period of residency at the community college). But this recommendation will be qualified by the condition that acceptance of AA transfers should take second priority behind the acceptance of first-time, freshman applicants.

The task force also wishes to see Evergreen develop ways of accepting students in the vocational or applied science programs as transfers. Several of these programs dovetail nicely with projected Evergreen programs and there is no reason why students transferring into these programs should be penalized for relevant, earlier work done in vocational studies. For example, we ought to be able to admit a nursing student who wishes to broaden her interests into the sphere of public affairs and public health; we should be able to take students from Early Childhood Education who are interested in our program in Human Development; and we

ought to be in a position to grant credit to a welding student who finds ways of exploiting this training in fine arts at Evergreen. The general rule, we believe, ought to be something like this: if an activity or study carried on at a community college were one which an Evergreen faculty member, surveying the student's total program and goals, would be willing himself to certify for credit under an off-campus study contract, then full transfer credit should be given to the student for that activity. In its final report, the task force will attempt to recommend how such a general policy might be put into practice by the Evergreen registrar's office. There is considerable agreement among the members of the task force at present that a system of deferred transfer credit given to students after they have been in residence at Evergreen for some period of time is the solution to this problem and to the related problem (not covered by our charge) of granting credit for work done at unaccredited institutions.

The task force is prepared to recommend, also, that the present policy of granting full credit "for all work done at an accredited institution" be modified at an early date in order to avoid such problems as inclusion of highschool and elementary school credits in transfer students' dossiers. Informally, the college has been warned that such a policy may mean failure to gain accreditation. Unfortunately, the policy is well known among community college people around the state and Evergreen is in the unenviable position of having to "go back on its word." This argues less for the defensibility of the present policy than for the necessity of greater care in the future in formulating and publicizing such policies. The task force believes that the community colleges will support us in establishing a liberal, but not completely open, transfer policy provided every effort is made to explain the policy and to keep it responsive to the needs of the transferring student. Further recommendations on this score are given below.

III. Evergreen and the Community Colleges. One of the more depressing aspects of present community college curricular patterns from the Evergreen point of view is the almost total absence of experimental and interdisciplinary programs in the liberal arts sections or divisions of the community colleges. Here comparison of what the community colleges are doing and what Evergreen plans to do educationally are difficult to make. In any reasonable prognosis, it will have to be admitted that Evergreen is likely to have some problems in getting transfer students oriented to such things as our coordinated studies programs. For the long run, two types of attack on this problem seem to be required:

(1) Innovation and Experimental Programs. Evergreen should begin at once to encourage experimentation and innovation in the community colleges. To this end, it would be useful to set up during the Spring of 1971 a state-wide conference on experimental education at Olympia, inviting deans of instruction and other interested parties from the community colleges, as well as people from Fairhaven and other experimental programs in the four-year schools, to discuss the problems of change in established liberal arts programs. It would be wise also if Evergreen tactfully, but without undue aggressiveness, made available members of its faculty as consultants on experimental education to the community colleges which express interest.

(2) The Problems of the Transfer Student. Evergreen should also begin to establish this spring an annual conference with the student services officers of the community colleges (in general: the deans of students) who direct advising and counselling services and who are largely responsible for conveying to faculty advisers and others the sense of Evergreen's transfer policies. For 1971, the purpose of the conference would simply be to get acquainted and to explain to these officers what Evergreen's academic program will be like for students transferring from their institutions. In future years, however, it will be possible to bring together students who have been at Evergreen for one or more terms, their former deans of students, and Evergreen faculty in order to thrash out the actual problems of articulation the students are having. This kind of contact seems likely in time to produce the greatest possible pressure on the community colleges to experiment with new programs. ~~They~~ ^{It} should also provide Evergreen's faculty with information about the effectiveness of various programs being tried in the community colleges and may, in this way, serve to stimulate Evergreen to try new ideas which those colleges have found successful.

It is quite evident that whatever Evergreen's decision on the question of becoming an "upper-division" college, relations between Evergreen and the community college faculties and administrations will be an extremely important matter to our students. The two approaches suggested here will, we hope, serve to bring us closer to those people who are working toward similar goals in Washington community colleges.

Will Humphreys, Chairman
 Dave Hitchens
 Perrin Smith
 Al Wiedemann

An appendix, outlining rough comparisons among the AA programs at a number of the community colleges is attached. Comparison is strictly on the basis of stated requirements. Institutions which have negotiated transfer arrangements with Central Washington State College are marked with a small x.