

## HUMANITIES AT EVERGREEN 71-72

This Report of the Status of the Humanities at Evergreen was undertaken over summer 72 (primarily in August) by a team of four faculty members and three students. The work was financed by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The first section of the report details curricular activities at Evergreen during the 71-72 school year. The information was culled from program descriptions, program histories, interviews with faculty and students, and student evaluations (both self-evaluations and faculty evaluations). We present it here in considerable detail. We attempted to be exhaustive, and the limitations and distortions in our findings are largely accounted for by the peculiarities of the sources of information.

It was necessary at the outset to impose some definition of "the humanities." Otherwise it would have been quite impossible to gather information or to arrive at any conclusions. After considerable debate the team settled on two separate definitions:

1. The traditional "disciplines" of foreign language study, literature, history, and philosophy, and those related disciplines--art history, philosophy of science, literary history--which are clearly related to these or derivative from them. We included also studies of Minority cultures--Black, Mexican-American, Native American--especially as they are dealt with culturally and historically, rather than politically or sociologically.
2. A curricular effort to explore "humane values" as they might apply to some problem or area of study, especially as material from the "traditional humanities" might be used to further such an effort.

The second definition, while we did ask about it, proved much too vague and slippery to deal with most of the time. As will be clear from the report itself, the first definition proved far easier to deal with. It had certain necessary advantages.

The first definition matched the core definition used by the NEH. While we insisted among ourselves that our report was primarily for internal use and not therefore to be legislated by the NEH, it was nevertheless true that we were to recommend grant proposals. It seemed self-defeating, therefore, to willfully ignore NEH standards.

But by far the most important consideration was that the first definition provided us with clear standards for examining our data, and a basis for fruitful criticism. The second definition, because it could be made to apply to anything and everything done at Evergreen last year, produced few useful distinctions and standards for criticism. Almost because the first definition raised serious issues that had not usually been considered in designing our curriculum, it provided the most provocative and useful base for the investigation.

The data base for the investigation was full of difficulties. The program histories seldom address themselves to curricular matters, and even less often discuss particular items in the curriculum which fall under our definitions. The program descriptions were often useful, but provide only a brief sketch, and no information about the rigor of study or about the broad effect of humanities materials. Faculty and student interviews sometimes provided more detailed information, but as often as not those interviewed failed to mention humanities materials that appeared in their programs and were mentioned by other sources. The student evaluations present a massive problem in themselves, and a separate report is devoted to our finding there.

Nevertheless the picture of each program gained by piecing together information from all available sources is, we would argue, largely accurate. Our standard for that judgment--the only one available in the absence of some other absolutely accurate source--is that the completed picture is not self-contradictory. The pieces fit.

This section of the report is arranged by discipline, each program taken alphabetically. General information from the student self-evaluations is listed separately. General conclusions follow each section. Sections on "What Was Wrong" and "What Can Be Done" follow. We attach an appendix of some of our working papers, which should clarify our assumptions and questions.