

THE REPORT OF THE REDUCTION-IN-FORCE DTF: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A CAMPUS-WIDE
REDUCTION PLAN FOR THE EVERGREEN STATE
COLLEGE

- I. The Charge to the DTF. Pursuant to legislative mandate of September 1973, the following two statements are understood to charge the college with the responsibility for developing a campus-wide plan to address the issue of a possible reduction-in-force. The first is by the Honorable Daniel J. Evans, Governor, in his Veto Message relative to Substitution Senate Bill #2956, on September 26, 1973:

I am convinced, however, of the need for the governing boards of the four-year state colleges and universities to adopt necessary and proper retrenchment procedures for the termination or non-renewal of faculty contracts in the event financial exigencies created by reduced enrollment or discontinuance of funded programs necessitates such action.

The second is by President Charles J. McCann of The Evergreen State College, in his memo to budget heads of November 6, 1973, in which he responded by establishing the present DTF, and which he subsequently charged with the responsibility of generating a reduction-in-force plan for our college:

Because of tenure policies at most institutions and the customary long advance notices for non-renewal of contracts, the legislative and executive concerns have been primarily with policies of reduction of faculty size. However, an enrollment drop affects the total budget and thereby the jobs of all employees. Therefore, I am asking that we conceive a campus-wide plan encompassing faculty, civil service and exempt staff and involving these groups in the development of such a plan.

- II. The Objectives. Early in its series of meetings, the DTF decided that the survival of The Evergreen State College's ability to pursue its goals as a learning community considered the primary objective, and that, in carrying out this objective, all steps be taken to deal humanely with all individuals involved in a reduction-in-force process. The Guidelines and Procedures subsequently generated by the DTF are designed to permit a reduction-in-force within our college, should that action become necessary, without undermining its academic goals and ideals, as set forth in the College Bulletin, in the Faculty Handbook, and in our Governance Documents. These Guidelines and Procedures follow.

III. Guidelines.

- A. During a reduction-in-force, every effort will be made to provide the maximum notice to those persons affected either through termination or through shifting of responsibilities in the event of reorganization. Requirements for notice

are applicable by law or by college policy: Civil Service employees have a minimum of three days in which to choose any available options in lieu of layoff, and a subsequent minimum of fifteen days before termination (cf. WAC 251-10, Appendix B); Members of the Faculty have notice policies as provided in the Faculty Handbook (Appendix C); Administrative-Exempt employees, while having no fixed period of notice, should be given the maximum feasible notice.

- B. During the reduction process, the actions considered and taken will occur in an atmosphere of open, clear communication.
- C. Any reduction-in-force should be undertaken with the clear goal in mind of maintaining as a minimum the legislatively-approved student/faculty ratio. Protection of this ratio is vital to the academic mission of the college.
- D. During a reduction-in-force, the college will make every effort to maintain its Affirmative Action goals pertaining to its non-white and female faculty and staff. Affirmative Action must be implemented at all times, in all actions, including the formation of the Advisory Group defined below.
- E. Any reduction actions taken will not be construed as superseding or repealing existing grievance procedures available to community members of The Evergreen State College through Civil Service rules, the College Governance Document, and the Faculty Handbook. The Advisory Group should make it clear that such procedures are available, should affected individuals need them.
- F. Every effort will be made by the College to aid those employees terminated during a reduction-in-force to find satisfactory employment elsewhere. This includes maintaining a RIF Termination List for a minimum of two years following a reduction-in-force; and, should a subsequent growth by the college occur during that time, thus allowing vacated positions to be re-established, priority in hiring for those positions shall be given to qualified persons on that List. Such persons shall be given thirty days to accept an offer of reemployment.

IV. Procedures.

- A. In the event of a fiscal crisis created by "reduced enrollment or discontinuance of funded programs," causing a cut in appropriations in such amount that

reduction-in-force becomes necessary, the Board of Trustees shall be asked by the President to declare a state of "Financial Exigency."

Following this declaration, an Advisory Group shall be formed by the President to recommend a plan for reorganization and reduction. The group will be composed of the Vice Presidents, one representative each from the Academic Deans, the Affirmative Action Office, the Library, Student Services, Business Office, Plant Management and Operations, Personnel Office, Auxiliary Services, at least three representatives each from the Faculty, the Student Body, and from the Classified Staff, and any other representatives the President deems necessary.

Within legislative intent, the Advisory Group shall draft a funding plan by budgetary program and recommend an organizational structure capable of carrying on the College's objectives within the framework of the funds available.

After the draft plan is approved by the President, he will charge the appointing authority of each respective budgetary unit with the responsibility for developing an operational plan for the unit within the funds available. The operational plan should identify specific functions and positions to be eliminated. Appointing authorities will submit their plans to their respective Vice Presidents for review. The Vice Presidents will submit the plans, as revised and approved, to the Advisory Group for final consideration prior to its making specific recommendations to the President.

The President, in consultation with the Advisory Group, will develop the final plan for the Board of Trustees' consideration.

The Advisory Group, during the entire process delineated here, will be charged with the responsibility for maintaining liaison with the rest of the College Community.

- B. Relative to reduction in faculty force, every attempt should be made during the remaining growth period of the college to provide a number of alternatives or buffers against the future necessity for terminating regular faculty appointments on short notice. The Evergreen State College is in a somewhat unique position among its sister institutions in still being able to look forward to a period of growth; we must therefore not miss the opportunity to build into its growth pattern a thoughtful plan for possible future reduction in the size of its faculty, should this become necessary.

Evergreen is in a unique position in another respect, also, in that it does not have a traditional faculty tenure system. The original Planning Faculty decided in 1970 to eschew the tenure system because experience at other institutions had shown that it was difficult to maintain a primary commitment to the continuous improvement of teaching skills under such a system. Our faculty serve, therefore, under a system of continuous evaluation, including an annual review of teaching effectiveness and growth in the teaching arts as a condition for renewal-of-appointment every three years. In order to maintain the esprit of the faculty required for this system's effectiveness, it is incumbent upon the college to maintain a variety of options for reducing faculty force, should such reduction become necessary.

Furthermore, the uniqueness of the college's position is underscored by the fact that its Academic Programs are not rigidly set in the traditional departmental structure, but are subject to annual formation and revision by the faculty, and to annual review by the Academic Deans. Thus, the maintenance of a faculty characterized by high quality, diversity, and creativity is both primary and prerequisite to the vigor and excellence of the Academic Programs.

Therefore: Upon declaration of a state of "Financial Exigency" by the Board of Trustees, the following proposed actions should be implemented, in order to alleviate the faculty portion of the fiscal crisis without the actual termination of faculty contracts:

1. Allowing normal attrition and non-replacement to provide as much relief as possible (an estimated 2 to 5 per cent reduction annually).
2. Continuing the twelve-month operation of the Academic Programs, but allowing faculty members to teach a maximum of three out of every four quarters (yielding an estimated 10 per cent reduction-equivalent).
3. Providing an automatic reduction-in-force through the elimination of the "Visiting Faculty" status at the end of any academic year (estimated 8 to 10 per cent reduction-equivalent), if the recommendations of this document's "Appendix A" are acted upon favorably.
4. Requesting a voluntary list of faculty members willing to accept six months' notice for a year's leave of absence without pay, in order to

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4. Requesting a voluntary list of faculty members willing to accept six months' notice for a year's leave of absence without pay, in order to

provide a temporary reduction-in-force while efforts are being made to correct the under-enrollment problem (yielding an estimated 10 to 15 per cent reduction-equivalent).

5. Asking the faculty to consider various job-sharing options, at least on a volunteer basis (two-quarter appointments, etc.). (This step would yield an estimated 5 to 10 per cent reduction-equivalent.)

In the extremely unlikely event that the above corrective measures prove inadequate to resolve a faculty-related reduction-in-force crisis, a state of "Extreme Financial Exigency" will be declared by the Board of Trustees upon the advice of the President, and the following procedures shall be invoked:

a) A Faculty Review Panel shall be elected by the faculty to serve in an advisory capacity to the Academic Deans and Provost; b) The Panel shall have a size equivalent to 6 per cent of the total faculty, and shall have a composition which properly reflects the then-existing proportions of women and minority persons; c) The Academic Deans and Provost, in consultation with the Panel, will then review the qualifications of each Member of the Faculty, regardless of his or her remaining terms of appointment, with respect to the performance criteria articulated in the Faculty Handbook (Appendix C), and decide who among the faculty are the most able to contribute to the academic mission of the College; d) On this basis, recommendations will be made to the President in order to accomplish the necessary reduction in the size of the faculty.

The timing of these actions shall provide the maximum possible notice to affected individuals.

Nothing in the foregoing shall be construed as abridging the rights of individual Members of the Faculty to the Grievance Procedures normally available in cases of non-reappointment.

- C. Relative to reduction in Classified and Exempt Staff, a variety of alternatives should be considered to minimize unnecessary termination as follows:
 1. Identifying those positions which might successfully function on an academic year, rather than a calendar year, basis.
 2. Considering the redistribution of duties among positions, making maximum use of normal attrition.

3. Some employees might wish to consider going to half-time, with their supervisors' approval, should that option fit into the reorganizational plan. (Classified employees cannot, by law, take a cut in salary as long as their duties and hours remain the same.)

Administrative-Exempt personnel accept appointment knowing that their essentiality depends upon the necessity of the function and the ability of the person to fulfill that function. They operate in a spirit of mutual trust and expectation of good will/good performance. This spirit must be carefully guarded through the procedures outlined in Part IV.a. of this document during any reduction-in-force.

Members of the Reduction-in-Force DTF:

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Mary Nelson
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