

Executive Summary

The Evergreen Student Experience Survey was designed to study how students perceive specific aspects of Evergreen's pedagogy and learning environment, to measure students' learning growth in 22 general skill areas and 9 computer-related skills, to understand students' goals and level of confidence, and to gauge student utilization of campus resources and participation in community activities. The survey was administered in Spring 2004.

The sample for the Evergreen Student Experience Survey contained 1,985 students. These students were respondents to the Evergreen New Student Survey and a stratified random sample of continuing students. Stratification was based on the proportion of continuing sophomores, juniors, and seniors among Evergreen degree-seeking undergraduates.

A total of 567 students responded to the Evergreen Student Experience Survey. The overall response rate was 29% of the sample and 16% of the population of degree-seeking undergraduates.

Below are brief summaries of responses by section.

Student Learning, Connectedness, and Satisfaction

This section covers a broad range of questions, primarily addressing academic experiences and satisfaction. Student perceptions of academic workload and choice are summarized in this section. Learning growth in a variety of areas, level of confidence, connectedness, plans to stay or leave, and goals after college are also included in this section.

Student Learning and Aspects of an Evergreen Education

This series of questions included many items related to academics at Evergreen. Students were asked to answer these questions on a scale of Very Negatively (-2), Negatively (-1), No Effect (0), Positively (1), and Very Positively (2). "Taking responsibility for your own learning," "interdisciplinary approach to course content," and "narrative evaluations by faculty instead of grades" had the highest means in this series of questions. See page 10.

Student Satisfaction with Aspects of an Evergreen Education

Other aspects of the student experience were measured on a scale of Very Dissatisfied (-2), Dissatisfied (-1), Neutral (0), Satisfied (1), and Very Satisfied (2). Among this series of questions, "overall quality of instruction" and "progress in achieving education goals" had the highest means. See page 12.

The amount of diversity at Evergreen was the only item in either the student learning or the student satisfaction series of questions to receive a negative mean score. About 39% of respondents reported being "Dissatisfied" or "Very Dissatisfied" with the amount of diversity at Evergreen. See page 12.

Academic Workload

Students were asked, "How does your academic workload seem to you?" Respondents rated their academic workload on a scale of 1-5 from Too Light (1) to Just Right (3) to Too Heavy (5). The most common response for all respondents was "Just Right." See page 13.

Academic Choice

There were shifts from quarter to quarter in the percentage of students who were unable to enroll in their first choice. Sophomores appeared to have the most difficulty enrolling in their first choice, particularly in Fall and Spring Quarters. See pages 13-15.

Learning Growth

Students were asked to what extent their experience at Evergreen contributed to their academic and personal growth in 22 skill areas. Highest means were on the items “learning independently” and “synthesizing information and ideas from many sources.” Lowest means were on “understanding and applying scientific principles and methods” and “understanding and applying quantitative principles and methods.” *See page 16.*

Information Technology Literacy

Students were asked a series of nine questions regarding Evergreen’s contribution to their progress in computer-related skills. Students rated Evergreen’s contribution on a scale of Not at All (0), Very Little (1), Some (2), Quite a Bit (3), and A Lot (4). Means were highest for “conducting research via the Internet or other on-line sources” and “using technology to present work, find information, and solve problems.”

Students most frequently answered “Not at All,” for all but three information technology literacy items. “Quite a Bit” was the most frequent response for conducting research via the Internet or other on-line sources and using technology to present work, find information, and solve problems. “Some” was the most frequent response to the question regarding writing a research paper using a computer. *See page 17.*

Connectedness

Students were asked two questions regarding their feeling of connectedness to the students in their program and/or courses, as well as their connectedness to the Evergreen community. Students rated their level of connectedness on a scale of 0 - 6, from Not at All Connected (0) to Moderately Connected (3) to Very Connected (6). The most common response on both items was “Moderately Connected.” *See page 18.*

Level of Confidence

Students were asked a series of seven questions on their level of confidence. Students rated their level of confidence on a scale of Not at All (0), A Little (1), Somewhat (2), Quite (3), and Very (4). The highest means were for confidence “that you have the ability to succeed at Evergreen” and “that you will be able to use your education to meet life-long goals.” Means were lowest for confidence “that you will be able to find a job or make a desired career change after graduation” and confidence “that you are obtaining technical skills in a specific field.” *See page 18.*

Plans to Stay or Leave Evergreen

Students were asked, “As of right now, do you plan on staying at Evergreen until you earn a Bachelor’s degree?” A total of 90.1% indicated that they were planning to stay. Twenty-one respondents (3.7%) indicated that they did not plan to stay. Thirty-five students (6.2%) indicated that they were unsure. *See pages 19-20.*

Goals After College

Students were asked how important a series of goals were after obtaining a college education. Students rated the goals on a scale of Not Important (0), Slightly Important (1), Important (2), and Very Important (3). The highest means were for the goals, “achieve personal success or satisfaction” and “personal growth and development.” The goals with the lowest means were “meet the expectations of my friends and family” and “contribute to scientific theory.”

Thirty percent of the respondents reported that creating original artistic work was “Very Important” to them. Twenty percent of the respondents indicated that starting or improving a business of their own was “Very Important.” *See pages 21-22.*

Diversity at Evergreen

Students were asked a series of questions about their level of satisfaction with the amount of diversity at Evergreen, the types of diversity they feel are lacking, ways that diversity could be improved, how important diversity is to their learning, and how much respect they think there is for different backgrounds, perspectives, and lifestyles on campus. *See pages 23-39.*

Differences were found in the level of satisfaction at Evergreen in Olympia, Tacoma, Grays Harbor, and the Tribal Reservation-based program. More students who studied on the Olympia campus indicated that they were "Dissatisfied" or "Very dissatisfied" with the level of diversity, 42% compared to 20% (N=1) at the Tribal Reservation-based program and 0% at both the Tacoma and Grays Harbor programs. *See page 23.*

Students were asked the question, "If you are dissatisfied with the amount of diversity at Evergreen, what kind of diversity do you find lacking?" Sixty-two percent of the students who responded to the question mentioned ethnic and/or racial diversity. Thirty percent mentioned political diversity. Other common types of diversity and themes were Socioeconomic, Economic, and Class Diversity; Diversity of Perspectives and Open-mindedness; Cultural Diversity; Activities, Curricula, and Programs; Geographic Diversity, International Students, and Out-of-State Students; Student Image, Persona, and Lifestyles; Age Diversity; Religious Diversity; and Gender and Sexual Orientation. *See pages 23-31.*

Students were asked what they thought would improve diversity on campus. Common themes among the suggestions were developing strategies for reaching out to new students; providing more financial aid and lowering the cost of attendance; improving programs and courses; changing the composition and cohesiveness of the Evergreen community; offering new activities and student groups; and promoting dialogue and acceptance on campus. *See pages 32-39.*

Students were asked to rate the importance of diversity on campus to their learning. Students rated importance on a scale of 0-6, with Not at All (0), Somewhat Important (3), and Very Important (6). The most common response was very important. *See page 39.*

Students were asked how much respect there is on campus for different backgrounds, perspectives, and lifestyles. Students rated the amount of respect on a scale of 0-6, with No Respect (0), Some Respect (3), and A Lot of Respect (6). The most common response was Some Respect. *See page 39.*

Student Employment and Housing

Students were asked whether they were working Spring Quarter. Results show an increase in the percentage of students who were employed by class standing, with the percentage of freshmen employed at about 42%, increasing to 53% of sophomores, 63% of juniors, and 70% of seniors. Overall, about 63% of the respondents were employed that quarter. *See page 40.*

Students were also asked about their housing situation in Spring 2004. Sixty-four percent of freshmen reported living in on-campus housing. The most common response for sophomores, juniors, and seniors was that they are living in a private home or apartment with non-family members. *See page 40.*

Utilization of Campus Resources

Students were asked a series of questions to understand their usage of campus resources. Most frequently used campus resources were the Computer Center, Computer Applications Lab, or computer workshops; Financial Aid Services; and Library Facilities and Services, with 42.6%, 39.1%, and 45.2%, respectively, indicating that they used these resources "A Lot." *See pages 41-42.*

Community Activities

Students were asked a series of questions about their participation in community activities. They were also asked two open-ended questions regarding their suggestions for improving campus activities and for new campus activities.

Participation in Community Activities

Students were asked a series of questions about how often they participate in community activities. Students responded on a scale of Haven't Participated (0), Participated a Little (1), Participated Some (2), and Participated a Lot (3). The most frequent response for all items except two was "Haven't Participated." The most frequent response was "Participated Some" for "attended Olympia Arts Walk or other community festivals", and "Participated A Little" on the item "attended lectures, panels, or conferences on campus." *See pages 43-45.*

Suggestions for Improving Campus Activities

Students were asked for suggestions for improving campus activities. A total of 176 students offered suggestions, some students offering more than one. Responses were analyzed and grouped into six common themes: 1) Accessibility, 2) Advertising, 3) Current and Future Activities at Evergreen, 4) Comments related to the Tacoma campus and Evening/Weekend studies, 5) Funding for Activities, and 6) Improving the Campus Environment. *See pages 46-49.*

Suggestions for New Campus Activities

Students were asked *what other activities* they would like to see on campus. A total of 152 students offered suggestions, some offering more than one suggestion. Common themes were suggestions for new athletics and recreation, music, arts, and food activities as well as new clubs, workshops, and classes. There were also suggestions for campus design and event locations. *See pages 50-55.*