

THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE November 2003 Accountability Report

The following annual accountability performance report closes the 2001-2003 Biennial Accountability Plan cycle. Original Accountability Plan baselines and targets are provided, as well as the interim measures reported in 2002 and current measures for 2002-03. An additional column in the following table (2000-01 performance) shows the final measures from the prior biennium's Accountability Plan 99-01 as reported to the HECB in October 2001. This column is provided for reference, since the summary "2002 Accountability Update" compiled by and presented to the HECB in December 2002 incorrectly reported that one of Evergreen's accountability measures was "unavailable."

For the 01-03 biennium, Evergreen met five of its performance targets, in fact, the college exceeded plan targets for undergraduate retention, five-year graduation rate, freshmen progress in quantitative thinking, and retention of students of color at Olympia. Evergreen is encouraged by continuing improvement in freshmen-to-sophomore retention, which came within 1% of meeting the long-term performance goal for this institution-specific measure. Freshmen GEI, student diversity learning, and the life-long learning index scores remain high, but have continued room for improvement. The broad measure of freshmen familiarity with computers is beginning to rebound, and Evergreen is buoyed by improvement in a similar, but more specific measure of freshmen progress in information technology literacy.

The Evergreen State College		<i>Submitted to HECB 10/31/01</i>	<i>Submitted to HECB 10/31/02</i>	<i>Submitted to HECB 10/20/03</i>	
Common Measures	AY96/97- 98/99 Baseline Performance	2000-01 Performance	2001-02 Performance	2002-03 Performance	2002-03 Biennial Plan Target
Graduation Efficiency Index					
a. Freshmen	93%	94%	92%	91%	94%
b. Transfers	90%	92%	90%	90%	90%
Undergraduate Retention (Overall)	76%	78%	80%	81%	78%
5-Year Freshman Graduation Rate	45%	45%	47%	49%	46%
Institution-Specific Measures					
Undergraduate Retention (Freshmen)	65%	69%	71%	74%	75%
Faculty Productivity					
Life-long Learning Index – Undergraduates	31.7	31.5	31.9	31.7	31.9
Freshmen—"Familiarity with Computers"	2.28	2.25	2.01	2.14	2.48
Freshmen—"Quantitative Thinking"	1.88	1.99	2.24	2.27	2.08
Diversity					
a. Retention, Students of Color (Olympia)	77%	79%	77%	81%	80%
b. Student Diversity Learning	3.18	3.29	3.29	3.22	3.49

What the Institution-specific Measures Mean

Retention: While reporting the common measure of overall undergraduate fall-to-fall retention, Evergreen elected to focus on retention of entering freshmen students in the current biennium. This is consistent with an internal focus on improvement. Evergreen also selected retention of students of color on the Olympia campus as one of its two diversity measures.

Life-Long Learning Index: Evergreen has used the “Life-long Learning Index” from the College Student Experience Questionnaire (CSEQ) as its faculty productivity measure. This index is a composite measure of students’ estimated gains in learning in following 11 areas: specialization for further education, broad general education, writing, familiarity with computers, understanding/getting along with different kinds of people, working as a team member, understanding developments in science/technology, analytical/logical thinking, quantitative thinking, synthesizing ideas, and learning on your own. For the current biennium, Evergreen has focused on the mean scores for two specific items within this index, specifically learning progress reported by **first-time, first-year** students for “**familiarity with the use of computers**” and “**quantitative thinking**.” Students rate each learning gain item on a 4-point scale from 1=very little progress to 4=very much progress. This focus is consistent with institutional initiatives related to General Education at Evergreen.

Student Diversity Learning: Undergraduate students’ reported progress at Evergreen in “**understanding other people and the ability to get along with different kinds of people**” (from the Life-long Learning Index/CSEQ).

Comments on Performance

Graduation Efficiency Index: Evergreen met the ambitious GEI long-term performance goal for transfer students again this year. Freshmen GEI fell 3% below the intended performance target for this biennium, but efficiency continues to be high for those who began Evergreen as freshmen. Movement of both measures has been slight over the years, and TESC anticipates little variation in future measures, either up or down. For students who began as freshmen, Bachelor of Science GEI improved 3% in 2003, compared to 2002. The slight decrease in freshmen GEI for 2003 primarily resulted from a small decrease in average graduation efficiency for Bachelor of Arts recipients that began as high school direct students. Evergreen will continue to watch this measure to ensure that this dip in Freshmen GEI is a minor fluctuation as opposed to a trend.

Retention: Undergraduate retention improved for the third consecutive year and exceeded the biennial plan performance target. Retention of Evergreen’s institutional-specific target population of new first-year students increased 3% compared to 2002, and the college hopes that this improvement indicates a trend that will continue. Evergreen came within 1% of meeting the very ambitious performance goal that was set for this biennium. Evergreen continues campus-wide efforts to improve freshman-to-sophomore retention rates and will continue to strive for ambitious goals in the next biennium.

Five-Year Freshman Graduation Rate: Evergreen’s freshman graduation rate is highly correlated with freshman retention to the sophomore year. The predicted rate for this year was expected to be lower than last year, because retention to the sophomore year was lower for the 1998 cohort of freshmen compared to the 1997 cohort. Evergreen is pleased to report, however, that the graduation rate for this year exceeded the predicted rate and the biennial plan target.

Freshman Learning Gains in “Familiarity with Computers”: This measure improved in comparison to 2002, but it failed to meet the biennial performance target despite significant efforts to increase the presence of information technology literacy across the curriculum. An end-of-program assessment of 2002-03 freshmen program offerings revealed that 62% included an emphasis on information technology literacy. Based on concerns that “familiarity with computers” was too broad a question to gain meaningful results, a new more specific technology item was added to the annual survey of student learning gains in Spring 2002. The results from this new item offer some optimism about freshmen progress in information technology skills. In response to how much progress they had made in “using technology to present work, find information, or solve problems,” the freshmen mean climbed from 2.27 in its first year of administration to 2.41 in 2003. The College intends to follow this new technology learning progress item closely and has proposed that it replace the former CSEQ question as a new institution-specific measure in the next biennium.

Freshman Learning Gains in “Quantitative Thinking”: This measure improved for the third consecutive year and far exceeded this biennium’s performance target. Evergreen began a systematic effort to increase the prevalence of quantitative reasoning across the curriculum in summer 2000, and our efforts appear to be demonstrating some early success. We are optimistic about our continuing efforts to improve this student learning outcome. We will continue to monitor this learning area as an institution-specific measure in the next biennium through a new student learning survey question about progress in “understanding and applying quantitative principles and methods.”

Retention of Students of Color on the Olympia Campus: This measure improved 4% this year compared to 2002, and it exceeded the biennial plan performance target and the long-term performance goal. Evergreen is encouraged by this improvement and will continue its efforts to maintain strong retention rates for students of color on the Olympia campus in the next biennium.

Student Diversity Learning Outcome: This measure decreased slightly in comparison to 2002 and failed to meet the biennial performance target. In 2003, 80% of the students surveyed reported they had progressed in this area “quite a bit” or “very much,” which were the two highest ratings. There is room to improve this learning outcome, and the College will continue efforts to promote students’ abilities to work and live in a diverse society through explicit curriculum planning, support services, campus activities, opportunities for campus dialogue, collaborative learning, and faculty development. Diversity learning will continue to be an institution-specific performance measure in the next biennium, although the College has proposed to replace the CSEQ measure with two new survey items as indicators for this area. The new learning survey items will assess progress in “understanding different philosophies and cultures” and “functioning as a responsible member of a diverse society.”