

# EVERGREEN

THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE  
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON



## Self-Evaluation

### Standard One: Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations

Submitted to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities  
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## Introduction

The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington is a public liberal arts college, nationally acclaimed for its interdisciplinary focus. In this report, Evergreen presents its mission as well as the core themes, objectives and associated indicators that will help the college assess mission fulfillment.

The college maintains many of the vital and distinctive practices that have been its hallmarks since it opened its doors in 1971: a dynamic curriculum characterized by full-time, team-taught interdisciplinary studies; learning communities; narrative evaluations of student work instead of grades; no faculty rank or disciplinary departments; inclusive governance structures and academic deans who rotate from and return to the faculty; and a teaching and learning culture where students engage with and take responsibility for their own work. In its strategic planning, the college has particularly intensified its work around two longstanding global concerns—diversity and sustainability—endeavoring to reflect these preeminent interests in its curriculum, teaching practices, hiring, recruitment and daily operations.

Evergreen’s unique approach to the liberal arts is articulated in the Five Foci and The Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate<sup>1</sup>. These values continue to shape teaching, learning and college operations. The core principles expressed in the foci—interdisciplinary studies, collaborative learning, learning across significant differences, student engagement and linking theory with practice—are widely known and shared across the institution.

Together with the Six Expectations, and building on campus-wide input from the college’s 2007 Strategic Plan Update, these principles guided an updated articulation of the Evergreen mission in early 2011 and the development of the core themes, objectives and indicators explained in this report. Emanating from the mission, the core themes reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the college itself, highlighting and reinforcing interdependence across fields of study, administrative divisions and strategic priorities. Together, these new and updated tools—mission statement, core themes, objectives, indicators—provide a clearer articulation of the linkage between aspiration and accomplishment.

**About the College** – The undergraduate program offers interdisciplinary Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees without stipulation of subject majors. The undergraduate program on the Olympia campus is complemented by a vibrant 200-student upper-division Tacoma program, an upper-division Reservation-Based Community Determined program serving Native American communities, an evening and weekend program in Grays Harbor, four graduate programs enrolling 300 students (Master of Environmental Studies, Master in Teaching, Master of Education\*, Master of Public Administration, including a Tribal Governance concentration), and five public service centers (The Longhouse Education and Cultural Center, the Northwest

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<sup>1</sup> **Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate:** Articulate and assume responsibility for your own work. Participate collaboratively and responsibly in our diverse society. Communicate creatively and effectively. Demonstrate integrative, independent, critical thinking. Apply qualitative, quantitative and creative modes of inquiry appropriately to practical and theoretical problems across disciplines. As a culmination of your education, demonstrate depth, breadth and synthesis of learning and the ability to reflect on the personal and social significance of that learning.

Indian Applied Research Institute, the Center for Community-Based Learning and Action, the Washington Center for Improving the Quality of Undergraduate Education, and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy).

Evergreen's fall 2010 student enrollment was 4833 with an annual average FTE of 4,558 for 2010-11. The college's resident/nonresident mix is 75/25. Across all student categories, 20 percent are students of color, 7 percent have a reported disability, and 43 percent are low income. Among undergraduates, 29 percent are first-generation baccalaureate students and 55 percent of the entering class is comprised of transfer students from other institutions. Based on fall 2010 figures, Evergreen employed 247 instructional faculty members of whom 25 percent were people of color, 50 percent were women, and 68 percent were teaching full time. In addition, there were 497 staff members of whom 24 percent were people of color, 57 percent were women, and 92 percent were employed full-time. The demographics of the community reflect the college's ongoing commitment to access and to serving traditionally underrepresented populations.

\* Suspension of the Master of Education program will be completed by 2012. See notes under Institutional Changes Since the Last Report.

## **Institutional Context**

Evergreen is one of six public baccalaureate institutions in Washington. It is one of a small number of public liberal arts colleges in the nation.

The college was founded on a mandate for innovation. Speaking in the late 1960s, Governor Daniel Evans declared the need for a "flexible and sophisticated educational instrument," as opposed to the "vast and immobile establishment," and expressed the need to "unshackle our educational thinking from traditional patterns." Senator Gordon Sandison, Chairman of the Advisory Council, remarked: "It was not the intent of the Legislature that this would be just another four-year college; [the college would be] a unique opportunity to meet the needs of the students today and the future because the planning would not be bound by any rigid structure of tradition as at the existing colleges nor by any overall central authority as is the case in many states." That spirit of innovation continues today.

The college receives strategic and policy direction from an eight-member board of trustees appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate. Seven of the members serve six-year terms. The eighth member, a student, serves a one-year term. College operations are led by the president with assistance from divisional vice presidents. There are four divisions: Academics, Student Affairs, Finance and Administration, and College Advancement.

Governance continues to reflect the college's core values and mission, employing an egalitarian, inclusive, community-based approach to organizing the college and responding to emerging issues. Among the unique features of Evergreen governance are Disappearing Task Forces rather than standing committees, a fully inclusive faculty meeting rather than a faculty senate, and the active and genuine engagement of students in governance activities.

While these approaches have served the college well, they, and the college overall, are being tested by some fundamental challenges and opportunities:

- Steep, rapid declines in state funding precipitated a fundamental shift from reliance primarily on state support to heavy dependence on tuition revenue—a trend that raises potential threats to access and diversity;
- The ongoing challenges of addressing general education goals for all students at a college that places profound emphasis on students' responsibility to shape their own education;
- Pressure from state policymakers to address specific employer demands, increase enrollments in critical state need areas, produce specialized degrees, and respond to shifting accountability requirements, even as state investments in the college rapidly decline;
- The changing character of the faculty as more recently hired faculty take on the role of building Evergreen's current embodiment of its founding and long-term values; and
- The continuing evolution of governance in the context of a relatively new (2008) faculty collective bargaining environment and a recently established (2006) student government.

## **Preface**

### **Institutional Changes Since the Last Report**

#### **Funding**

Reduction in state support to public higher education represents the most significant change since the last self study. In a period of just four years, state operating funding for the college has declined by 50 percent, the proportion of state funds to tuition funding for college operations has shifted from 65/35 to 35/65, and state-set resident undergraduate tuition levels have increased by nearly 60 percent. While enrollment beyond state baselines and a robust nonresident student mix once provided the college with a cushion of financial flexibility to adapt to changing needs and conditions, those enrollment and nonresident student levels are now included in the college's base budget assumptions. This shift increases the pressure to sustain or improve recruitment, student mix and retention. These outcomes in turn rely on curriculum and support services designed to attract out-of-state students, while providing the financial aid and student support necessary to continue access and success for Washington residents and underrepresented groups.

In the context of reduced public funding, it is particularly important to note the college's strategic initiatives to dramatically increase fundraising capacity; an effort helped substantially in recent months by a \$3 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The grant includes funds for student scholarships, expansion of fundraising capacity and initiatives related to student retention.

#### **Academic Leadership**

In July 2011, the college welcomed a new provost, Michael Zimmerman. The post was vacated in winter 2010 when the serving provost left Evergreen to assume the presidency of another institution. Longtime faculty member Ken Tabbutt ably filled the interim position for 18 months.

The recruitment and selection process for this important appointment engaged the institution broadly beginning in spring of 2010 and dominated much of the collective work of the college for most of the 2010-11 academic year. The process began with a campus survey of priorities for a new provost, yet another contribution to the shared articulation of values that inform the mission and core themes identified here.

### **Academic Structures and Initiatives**

In the absence of academic departments, the Evergreen curriculum is organized around curricular Planning Units which were established through a curriculum revision conducted in the late 1990s. Those planning units (Scientific Inquiry; Culture/Text/Language; Environmental Studies; Expressive Arts; and Society, Politics, Behavior and Change) represented disciplinary approaches larger than traditional academic departments, but did not cross major divisions of academia. Through an organic, faculty-driven process, two new planning units have been established which reflect very broadly interdisciplinary interests. The Consciousness Studies and Sustainability and Justice planning units demonstrate increased commitment to expanding the breadth of the interdisciplinary inquiries they will pursue. They engage faculty from widely diverse academic disciplines in order to explore complex questions across an array of modes of inquiry.

The Re-Modeling Teaching and Learning at Evergreen (RTaLE) task force has been a substantial piece of the work of the academic division and others over the past two years and is expected to continue through fall of 2011. The work of the RTaLE task force is described briefly below in the section on responses to topics requested by the Commission. The work of RTaLE is expected to form a stepping stone toward a further major initiative focused on curriculum development, addressing the challenge of assuring the breadth of an interdisciplinary liberal arts education while also responding to student demand and supporting students' responsibility for defining their own work.

### **Suspensions of Programs**

The Masters of Education program has been suspended and there were no new student admissions as of summer 2011; the last remaining cohort will complete degrees in winter 2012. A dramatic drop in student demand for the program motivated this decision. Shifting state policies and budget climate precipitated this decline in demand. Additionally, the dual Master of Environmental Studies and Master of Public Administration degree pathway was also cancelled due to administrative challenges and increasingly incompatible curricular structures.

Finally, through a mutual agreement with statewide labor leadership, the Labor Center (one of Evergreen's public service centers) was relocated to South Seattle Community College. The Center is no longer formally affiliated with Evergreen.

### **Information Systems**

The development of two major information systems involved substantial investment in time and resources across the institution. The college implemented a human resources information system as well as a curriculum management database based on Banner software.

## **Facilities**

In the realm of campus facilities, one new building was constructed and renovations of several major buildings were completed, are underway or are in the planning phases. The new building is the Sustainable Agriculture Lab, built on the grounds of the Organic Farm, greatly expanding the teaching facilities available on site. Renovations include the College Activities Building (completed), the Arts Annex (completed), the Longhouse (completed), the Communications Building (construction pending), Science Laboratory areas (partially completed) and the Lecture Halls (pre-design planning).

## **Response to Topics Requested by the Commission**

In October 2010, a progress report was submitted to NWCCU regarding the following recommendations from the 2008 Comprehensive Evaluation:

### **Recommendation One**

The Committee recommends that The Evergreen State College develop a more streamlined, systematic method of collecting curricular and co-curricular assessment data. Attention to analysis, storage, and wide sharing of the data will better inform the college's teaching, learning and program-planning practices. Though the college has demonstrated advances in assessment and has collected large amounts of valuable information, it would benefit from more clarity and greater accessibility of this information.

### **Recommendation Two**

The Committee recommends that The Evergreen State College strengthen the teaching and documentation of the natural sciences, mathematics and fine arts as parts of a substantial and coherent program of general education. The college has made progress in the documentation of general education since the previous accreditation visit and has implemented a program entitled "The Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate." General education is well documented, especially in the humanities and social sciences and in critical thinking, writing and speaking. Though some progress has occurred in fine arts, science and math, more focused teaching and clearly embedded curriculum is required to fulfill these areas.

From the report:

The mission of The Evergreen State College is to sustain a vibrant academic community and offer students an education that will help them excel in their intellectual, creative, professional and community service goals. We recognize that in order to fulfill this mission we need to utilize institutional data to inform curriculum planning as well as support student success, enrollment and retention initiatives. In response to Recommendation One, Evergreen has increased its capability to collect and assess institutional data and improved mechanisms for dissemination and integration of these data in planning processes. The Institutional Research and Assessment office (IRA) provides regular reports as well as special one-time queries that are used as a basis for planning and policy development and to monitor progress toward institutional benchmarks and goals.

Evergreen has invested in systems to acquire and manage institutional data. Student and faculty surveys as well as a new centralized curriculum database will provide additional capacity for analyzing teaching, learning and student success. The IRA website provides easy access to data and reports about students, student experience, faculty, alumni, teaching and learning, and accountability and performance reports. IRA also provides timely customized queries and reports as needed. These initiatives have significantly improved our ability to make data-driven decisions and assess our progress toward strategic goals.

Evergreen developed *The Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate* in order to promote a broad, liberal arts education without curricular requirements but, as the recommendation notes, it hasn't been completely successful. Over the past two years, the faculty and administration have been working collaboratively to design a system that encourages students to meet these expectations without implementing course distribution requirements. The *Transcript Review: Learning Outcomes Assessment* was the first step; it produced a systematic method of assessing how well students were fulfilling our expectations. This assessment tool provides quantitative documentation and will allow longitudinal monitoring.

Once the learning outcomes were quantified, a separate summer group reviewed the data and other historical documents and proposed strategies to address the general education concerns as noted in the recommendation. As a result, a Disappearing Task Force (DTF), Re-Modeling Teaching and Learning at Evergreen (RTaLE), was charged in 2009. RTaLE has focused on improvements in advising and iterative student reflection essays (academic statements). We anticipate that implementation of RTaLE's work will be a significant step in addressing Recommendation Two. We anticipate it will also prompt additional reflection on any needed adjustments to the curriculum.

## **Date of Most Recent Review of Mission and Core Themes**

The mission statement was reviewed and revised in a process begun in spring 2010 and finalized by the board of trustees on April 28, 2011. The core themes were developed in a parallel process which was finalized by the Accreditation Steering Committee in May of 2011. Per institutional protocol, the trustees were advised of the core themes as part of an overall update on the accreditation process.

The steering committee leading this process included representation from across college divisions:

John Carmichael (Executive Assistant to the President)\*  
Savvina Chowdhury (Faculty)  
Laura Coghlan (Director of Institutional Research and Assessment)\*  
Art Costantino (Vice President for Student Affairs)  
Wendy Endress (Executive Associate to the Vice President for Student Affairs)  
Lee Hoemann (Vice President for Advancement)  
John Hurley (Vice President for Finance and Administration)  
Lester Krupp (Faculty)  
Anita Lenges (Faculty)

Nancy Murray (Academic Dean)  
Collin Orr (Director of Business Services)  
Sarah Pedersen (then Interim Academic Dean)\*  
Rita Pougiales (Faculty)\*  
Julie Slone (Executive Assistant to the Provost)\*  
Todd Sprague (Director of Marketing, Communications, and College Relations)\*  
Ken Tabbutt (then Interim Provost and Academic Vice President/Accreditation Liaison Officer)\*

A subcommittee of the steering committee, in regular consultation with the larger group, developed revisions to the mission statement and drafted core themes. Both were shared with the college community and revised repeatedly based on community response. College community groups formally consulted in this process included the academic deans, curriculum planning units, Strategic Enrollment Group, Geoduck Student Union, Finance and Administration Directors, Student Affairs deans and directors, graduate program directors, Tacoma and Reservation-based program directors, public service center directors, Faculty Agenda Committee, Re-Modeling Teaching and Learning at Evergreen Task Force chairs, planning unit coordinators, academic staff and senior staff. During winter and spring quarters of 2011, the Board of Trustees deliberated actively regarding the mission statement and contributed substantial revisions with final approval in April 2011. The steering committee meanwhile continued work on the core themes consistent with the mission, finalizing those themes as well in the spring of 2011.

\* Subcommittee members

# **Chapter One: Mission, Core Themes, and Expectations**

## **Section I – Executive Summary of Eligibility Requirements 2 and 3**

### **Authority**

The Washington State Legislature founded The Evergreen State College in 1967. The governor appoints the college's board of trustees and the state authorizes the college to operate and award undergraduate and graduate degrees under Washington state law (Chapter 28B.40 RCW).

### **Mission and Core Themes**

As noted above, the mission statement was reviewed and revised in a process begun in spring 2010 and finalized by the board of trustees on April 28, 2011. The core themes were developed in a parallel process which was finalized by the Accreditation Steering Committee in May of 2011. Per institutional protocol, the trustees were advised of the core themes as part of an overall update on the accreditation process.

The core themes reflect the primary work of the college—teaching and learning in the pursuit of student goals, recognized degrees, and an informed and active citizenry—and institutional resources are predominantly focused on this work.

## **Section II – Mission**

### **Mission Statement**

As an innovative public liberal arts college, Evergreen emphasizes collaborative, interdisciplinary learning across significant differences. Evergreen's academic community engages students in defining and thinking critically about their learning. Evergreen supports and benefits from local and global commitment to social justice, diversity, environmental stewardship and service in the public interest.

### **Interpretation of Fulfillment of the Institution's Mission**

#### **Core Themes**

- Integrated, interdisciplinary learning
- Individuals engaged in community
- Environmental stewardship and social justice
- Diversity and equity

Fulfilling Evergreen's mission encompasses two major, interrelated elements. The first element is academic: student success in meeting the Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate, which collectively represent the actualization of the academic values articulated in the Five Foci. Second is the broader role of the college as an organization serving the public interest. This interest is represented most importantly by Evergreen graduates actively contributing to the public good, but also in the aspiration that the institution function as a good citizen, operating and contributing more broadly according to the values expressed in the mission.

The first two core themes express academic aspirations, with implications for the operation of the entire institution. The pedagogical commitment to **integrated, interdisciplinary learning** is based strongly in the aspiration that students contribute effectively to society. In order to understand complex societal problems, students must work across disciplinary boundaries. As articulated in the Six Expectations, Evergreen graduates should be able to apply “modes of inquiry appropriately to practical and theoretical problems across disciplines” and to “demonstrate depth, breadth and synthesis of learning and the ability to reflect on the personal and social significance of that learning.” Fulfillment of this core theme requires that the college offer a curriculum that provides substantial access to broadly interdisciplinary programs, as well as pathways for depth in selective areas appropriate to a liberal arts curriculum, with the opportunity for culminating senior experiences to promote the integration of such work.

If Evergreen graduates are to contribute to the public interest as **individuals engaged in community**, they must develop the crucial abilities particular to collaboration, including effective communication and individual responsibility. Thus, Evergreen graduates should expect to develop the capacity to “participate collaboratively and responsibly in our diverse society,” requiring the ability to “communicate creatively and effectively” and “articulate and assume responsibility for their own work.” Fulfillment of this core theme means continuing a strong emphasis on intellectual and applied work in communities, substantial cross-curricular emphasis on communication, and constant attention to welcoming and engaging difference. Finally, and fundamentally, if Evergreen graduates are to contribute responsibly, they will need to develop the ability to “reflect on the personal and social significance of their work” and be supported by the college in the development and articulation of that capacity.

Evergreen expects graduates to “participate collaboratively and responsibly in our diverse society,” but mission fulfillment means contributing responsibly as an organization as well. The two core themes focusing on particular social values require academic and broader organizational methods and commitments. Thus the college commitments to **environmental stewardship and social justice** as well as **diversity and equity** inform the curriculum and pedagogy, but also significantly impact systems throughout the institution beyond their functions in support of education. Mission fulfillment in these areas means that institutional decisions, from strategic planning to daily operations, are informed by considerations of environmental responsibility, social justice, diversity and equity.

The overall result of these commitments is an institution in which the faculty, staff, students and the larger community of alumni and friends, understand the interconnection of Evergreen’s academic activities and general operations with the college mission and, as a result, its service to the public interest. The following objectives and indicators will enable assessment of mission fulfillment.

### **Articulation of an Acceptable Threshold of Mission Fulfillment**

In order to facilitate and assess the aspirations articulated in the mission and the themes, three to four objectives are associated with each core theme. A lengthy set of indicators was identified for each of the 13 objectives, and the indicators were winnowed down through a deliberative

process to those presented below. Indicators derived from primary learning assessment activities were prioritized, as they most directly address the Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate, and others were selected because they offered the opportunity to contextualize performance through peer comparison. Duplicative measures that addressed essentially the same concept through slightly different means were eliminated, so that the remaining indicators address different aspects of each objective. Recent results for the indicators were gathered and considered in light of the college mission and core themes. The college recognized that improvement is both desirable and achievable for six of the objectives. For the other seven objectives, the indicators showed evidence of a high level of mission-related achievement, and the college remains committed to supporting these distinctive aspects of the mission despite significant environmental and budgetary challenges. Improvement or maintenance of effort in each objective will be understood to be a collective assessment; that is, the college does not expect improvement in every indicator every year, but rather seeks improvement in aggregate in the objective over the period of the assessment.

**Core Theme One: Integrated Interdisciplinary Learning**

Integrative, interdisciplinary learning	Improve
Multiple modes of thinking	Maintain
Breadth and depth of learning	Improve

**Core Theme Two: The Individual Engaged in Community**

Participate collaboratively and responsibly in our diverse society	Maintain
Communicate creatively and effectively	Maintain
Articulate and assume responsibility for one’s work	Improve
Linking theory and practice	Improve

**Core Theme Three: Environmental Stewardship and Social Justice**

Environmentally sustainable institutional operations	Improve
Environmental and social justice curriculum	Maintain
Foster awareness of sustainability and social justice beyond the curriculum	Maintain

**Core Theme Four: Diversity and Equity**

Learning across significant differences	Maintain
Supportive community	Improve
Student access and success	Maintain

## Section III – Core Themes

### Core Theme One: Integrated Interdisciplinary Learning

The Evergreen State College aspires to ensure that its graduates are able to fully and meaningfully integrate knowledge. Thus an Evergreen education emphasizes complex, thematic, open inquiries across all academic fields at the graduate as well as undergraduate levels. These inquiries require interdisciplinary approaches, multiple modes of thinking and the synthesis of learning. Curricular practices that support integrated, interdisciplinary learning include thematic studies; project-based learning; full- and half-time programs; multi-quarter programs emphasizing cumulative, integrative work; interdisciplinary teaching teams; studio, lab and field studies; and seminars. Academic structures and the institutional culture support a curriculum that develops content knowledge, addresses emergent questions and encourages pedagogical experimentation. Organizational structures, procedures and policies for curriculum development, class scheduling, facilities planning, college governance, hiring and support services are designed to facilitate interdisciplinary and holistic teaching and learning.

#### Objective 1: Integrative, interdisciplinary learning

Indicator	Source
Percentage of programs that are broadly interdivisional (with at least three divisions included moderately or extensively) of the following: art, humanities, natural/physical science, math/quantitative and symbolic reasoning, or social science	End-of-Program Review
Students can appropriately apply modes of inquiry across disciplines	Transcript Review
Alumni satisfaction with interdisciplinary approach to education	Alumni Survey
Participation in a culminating senior experience (comprehensive exam, capstone, thesis, project, etc.)	National Survey of Student Engagement (with peer reference to other Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges)

#### Rationale for Objective: Integrative, interdisciplinary learning (Improve)

Evergreen excels in the extent to which interdisciplinary approaches dominate the curriculum and institutional structures. However, tensions persist between this pedagogical commitment and traditional interests in more focused disciplinary work, whether expressed through external educational policies, faculty interest or student demand. These competing interests create pressure to offer a more focused curriculum. Further, without distribution requirements, students at Evergreen can choose to limit the interdisciplinary breadth and integration of their overall educational trajectory. To strengthen the likelihood that students experience interdisciplinary breadth and integration, Evergreen must provide a substantial number of programs whose fields of inquiry span at least three of the divisions of liberal education (art, humanities,

natural/physical science, math/QSR, or social science). Currently, one-third of programs are broadly interdivisional; the college will encourage faculty and curriculum deans to plan and offer up to 10 percent more such programs. Culminating projects or capstone experiences can help students integrate their educational experience, bringing together the disciplinary practices and breadth of content covered over the college career. Evergreen lags behind its public liberal arts college peers in this high-impact practice and considerably more graduating seniors should be encouraged to participate in such projects.

**Objective 2: Multiple modes of thinking**, including critical thinking, synthesis, reflexive thinking and self-reflection (meta-cognition)

Students demonstrate integrative, independent and critical thinking	Transcript Review
Students demonstrate synthesis of learning	Transcript Review
Students reflect on the personal and social significance of their work	Transcript Review
Coursework promotes deep learning as evidenced by the Deep Learning Scale (integration, reflection, higher order thinking)	National Survey of Student Engagement (with peer reference to other Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges)

**Rationale for Objective: Multiple modes of thinking (Maintain)**

The development of the capacity for complex thought is a fundamental aim of liberal education. At Evergreen, End-of-Program Reviews report that 100 percent of programs encouraged the development of multiple modes of thinking, especially in higher order categories such as integrative, synthetic, reflexive, reflective, critical, creative and independent thinking. To facilitate the assessment of the success of this emphasis, three indicators from transcripts were selected that relate to specific modes of thinking as stated in the Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate. In the most recent transcript assessment, over 90 percent of the sample of graduates demonstrated evidence in their transcripts that they met the expectations for integrative, independent and critical thinking; synthesis of learning; and reflection on the personal and social significance of their learning. The fourth indicator selected for this objective will come from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which has been developing a “deep learning scale” and subscales for integration, reflection and higher order thinking. Based on NSSE’s initial pilots and research into this measure, Evergreen exceeds its public liberal arts peers in the elements of thinking that contribute to deep learning. NSSE will formally launch its deep learning scale as a regular measure with their revised survey in 2013, and the college will have an important new indicator with which to reflect on student learning. The goal for this objective will be to maintain emphasis on multiple modes of thinking—especially higher order thinking skills—and continue work to ensure that students’ capacity for thought is demonstrated in their narrative transcripts.

### **Objective 3: Breadth and depth of learning**

Students demonstrate breadth of learning	Transcript Review
Students demonstrate depth of learning	Transcript Review
Students demonstrate ability to use qualitative, quantitative and creative modes of inquiry	Transcript Review

#### **Rationale for Objective: Breadth and depth of learning (Improve)**

Evergreen continues to work to develop and implement strategies that will encourage more consistent achievement of breadth, depth, and multiple modes of inquiry (qualitative, quantitative and creative) among undergraduates. In the last transcript assessment, while 92 percent of transcripts evidenced depth of learning, only 74 percent of student transcripts demonstrated that students met the college's expectation for breadth of learning. This issue was particularly pronounced for Bachelor of Arts earners (72 percent versus 86 percent for students earning a Bachelor of Science). Given Evergreen's lack of distribution requirements and focus on a student's responsibility for defining and articulating his or her own work, the college has to assure, as identified in Objective 1, rich access to broadly interdivisional programs that make it more likely that students will encounter an array of disciplines and modes of inquiry in pursuing their self-defined interests. The ongoing work of the Re-Modeling Teaching and Learning at Evergreen Disappearing Task Force seeks to implement a more deliberate faculty advising structure and a new iterative academic statement that will raise awareness among students of the importance of pursuing the breadth of a liberal arts education and multiple modes of inquiry in the context of their self-determined work. Transcript reviews will provide the evidence to assess Evergreen's success in improving documented breadth and depth of learning.

#### **Core Theme Two: The Individual Engaged in Community**

Evergreen emphasizes learning through collaboration among responsible individuals who define and articulate their work within the context of supportive learning communities, thus building the basis for lifelong learning and civic engagement. Collaborative learning in community supports transformative thinking and the construction of knowledge, leading to new understandings of self and others. Students exercise intellectual and civic responsibility by linking theory and practice inside and outside the classroom, on and off campus. Evergreen values its reciprocal relationship with local and global communities as demonstrated by the active commitment to social justice, diversity, environmental stewardship and service in the public interest. Students, staff and faculty work together in collaborative decision-making to create a stronger community. Through collaborative learning and by linking theory to practice, Evergreen prepares students to be informed and active citizens throughout their lives.

**Objective 1: Participate collaboratively and responsibly in our diverse society**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Source</b>
Students participate collaboratively and responsibly	Transcript Review
Students participate in our diverse society	Transcript Review
Students engage in collaborative learning	National Survey of Student Engagement (with peer reference to other Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges)
Alumni satisfaction with Evergreen’s contribution to ability to function as a responsible member of a diverse community and work collaboratively in a group	Alumni Survey

**Rationale for Objective: Participate collaboratively and responsibly in our diverse society (Maintain)**

Active and collaborative learning is a defining characteristic of Evergreen’s pedagogy, and the college will maintain its strength in this area. In terms of collaborative and responsible participation, fully 99 percent of transcripts in the most recent review showed evidence that students had met this expectation, and 92 percent had met the expectation of participation in our diverse society. Through over a decade of participation in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Evergreen has set a high-water mark for the benchmark of Active and Collaborative Learning in reference to its peer groups, and mission fulfillment means continuing to exceed the performance of other public liberal arts colleges on the new revised Collaborative Learning benchmark that will be released by NSSE with its 2013 revised survey.

**Objective 2: Communicate creatively and effectively**

Students communicate creatively and effectively	Transcript Review
Alumni satisfaction with Evergreen’s contribution to their ability to write effectively, speak effectively, express themselves in creative/artistic ways, give effective presentations, and participate in class discussion	Alumni Survey

**Rationale for Objective: Communicate creatively and effectively (Maintain)**

Evergreen will maintain its emphasis on the development of strong communication skills among students. The most recent transcript review revealed that 98 percent of graduates met the expectation that they communicate creatively and effectively. Based on the End-of-Program Review, opportunities for students to practice writing and improve their skill in this form of communication are widely available across all types and levels of academic programs. In addition to transcript evidence, the second indicator selected for this objective is a newly developed index of alumni satisfaction with Evergreen’s contribution to growth across multiple forms of communication: writing, speaking, discussion, presentation and creative/artistic expression. To continue this emphasis, Evergreen is monitoring alumni satisfaction in this area. Currently, Evergreen has strong performance, with about 70 percent of alumni being mostly or

very satisfied across all areas of this new composite indicator. The emphasis on culminating projects, an indicator to be improved under the first objective, will also contribute to this objective.

**Objective 3: Articulate and assume responsibility for one’s own work**

Students articulate and assume responsibility for their own work	Transcript Review
Percentage of undergraduate graduating class who complete summative self-evaluation/academic statement	Administrative data
Alumni satisfaction with advising	Alumni Survey
Alumni satisfaction with the education they were able to construct as an Evergreen student	Alumni Survey

**Rationale for Objective: Articulate and assume responsibility for one’s own work (Improve)**

Most undergraduate alumni are satisfied with the education they were able to construct as an Evergreen student (92 percent in the most the recent assessment). Furthermore, Evergreen has seen welcome improvements recently in alumni satisfaction with advising, in terms of both the newly developed composite advising satisfaction indicator and its individual elements—the professional Academic Advising Office and academic advising by faculty. Ninety-six percent of transcripts showed evidence that graduates met the expectation that they articulate and assume responsibility for their own work. On the other hand, less than 10 percent of each graduating class for the past three years has completed a summative narrative evaluation for their transcripts and end-of-year self-evaluations are less consistent in both quantity and quality. Evergreen undergraduates are responsible for designing their own pathways through the curriculum to earn their degree, and they do not earn formal majors, thus it is particularly important that students articulate their understanding of the choices and pathways they have taken in order to communicate both academic content and level of their accomplishments. In November 2010, the faculty passed a resolution requiring students to write a synthetic academic statement for their transcript. The final academic statement will add clarity to students’ official records for external audiences and transparency regarding their own articulation of the path they created to earn their liberal arts degree. Improved structures for faculty advising and an electronic repository providing access to the documents representing the student’s academic career are being proposed to support this requirement.

**Objective 4: Linking theory and practice**

Students appropriately apply modes of inquiry to theoretical and practical problems	Transcript Review
Programs include community-based projects and/or service learning	End-of-Program Review and graduate directors

Student participation in practicum, internships, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment	National Survey of Student Engagement (with peer reference to other Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges)
Coursework emphasized applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	National Survey of Student Engagement (with peer reference to other Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges)
Student participation in community service or volunteer work	National Survey of Student Engagement (with peer reference to other Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges)

### **Rationale for Objective: Linking theory and practice (Improve)**

In 97 percent of the sample of narrative transcripts studied in the last assessment, reviewers found evidence that students met the expectation to appropriately apply modes of inquiry to theoretical and practical problems. Community-based projects, intensive research and creative projects, independent work and internships are some of the learning activities that were likely to show evidence of linking theory and practice. About one-third of Evergreen academic programs include community-based projects or service learning activities, some of which are supported by the Center for Community-Based Learning and Action, and others are developed by the faculty or students in these programs. In terms of students' perceptions of how much their coursework emphasizes applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations (NSSE indicator), Evergreen used to significantly outpace public liberal arts peers, yet in recent assessments Evergreen students report less emphasis in this area while our peers report increased activities. In terms of student participation in community service or volunteer work, Evergreen seniors are significantly less likely than seniors at peer institutions to have this experience. There is thus room for improvement and stabilization of experiences designed to link theory and practice both in the realm of service and of work-like experience.

### **Core Theme Three: Environmental Stewardship and Social Justice**

Evergreen embeds considerations of environmental stewardship and social justice into its curriculum and its operations to increase awareness of the consequences of individual and collective decisions, promote and model positive engagement, and limit negative impacts on others and on the environment. The study and practice of environmental stewardship are deeply linked to questions of equity and diversity, as the allocation and consumption of increasingly scarce resources determine the ability to foster healthy communities locally and globally. Civic and environmental stewardship require the complex and rich interdisciplinary interaction of historically segregated inquiries such as science and public policy or science and cultural studies. Evergreen's curriculum assumes that thinking critically about vital environmental challenges such as climate change or food security requires grounding in scientific principles and methods, as well as rigorous examination of social, political and economic systems.

Sustainability, social justice and environmental studies figure prominently throughout much of the undergraduate and graduate curriculum. High-level standing committees further campus planning and goals; distinctive facilities incorporate green design and function; and student organizations generate an array of campus activities and projects. Many campus initiatives facilitate increased community awareness. Examples from 2011 include Synergy, the Science Carnival, the Center for Community-Based Learning and Action, Ban the Bottle Day, the Clean Energy Committee, the Teaching Gardens, alternative commuting challenges, the Campus Land Use Committee, the Center for Ecological Living and Learning, and the Sustainability Council. Fundamental pedagogical strategies support the connection of sustainability and justice theory with real-life applications, emphasizing field studies, hands-on research and community service.

**Objective 1: Environmentally sustainable operations**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Source</b>
Greenhouse gas emissions/carbon footprint (metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent; MTCDE)	Office of Sustainability
Campus waste volumes – landfill	Facilities (Grounds)
Percentage of food expenditures that come from local/organic food sources	Aramark, Residential and Dining Services, and Student Activities/Flaming Eggplant student-run café

**Rationale for Objective: Environmentally sustainable operations (Improve)**

Evergreen is committed to improvement in this objective. Carbon neutrality has been embraced as a long-term strategic goal of the college, and thus efforts are underway to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The college has also committed to achieving zero waste, which requires reduced consumption overall as well as the use of more recyclable, compostable and renewable resources in order to divert waste from landfills. Efforts are underway within campus dining, the student café and conference services to use local and organic foods. New processes and metrics will be developed and tracked on an annual basis to make more transparent the percent of local and organic foods used in campus dining services.

**Objective 2: Environmental and social justice curriculum**

Percentage of our programs that include sustainability (by planning unit)	End-of-Program Review and graduate directors
Alumni satisfaction with Evergreen’s contribution to their ability to understand the interaction of society and the environment and understand and apply scientific principles and methods	Alumni Survey
Develop and initiate articulation of sustainability as a learning outcome	Faculty/staff dialogue concurrent with transcript review

### **Rationale for Objective: Environmental and social justice curriculum (Maintain)**

Sustainability—broadly defined to include topics such as ecology, consumption, sustainable design, sustainable business, social justice, environmental justice, environmental ethics, climate change, environmental health, conservation, and understanding the interaction of society and the environment—is present in nearly 70 percent of Evergreen’s programs. Such content appears across planning units and is found in both the undergraduate and graduate curriculum. Although this area of study is increasing in the curriculum, included in the revised mission statement, and encouraged in a variety of ways at Evergreen, it became clear during the community deliberation about this core theme that there is not a clear, shared understanding of what Evergreen means by sustainability and what the adoption of this commitment means for various areas of the college, especially in the curriculum. In particular, faculty from different areas of the college have different definitions and concerns about the inclusion of sustainability studies in the curriculum, and such tensions reveal a need to develop interdisciplinary and multidimensional definitions. Evergreen will strive to maintain recent growth in this relevant curricular focus and will pursue conversations designed to develop a shared understanding of sustainability learning.

### **Objective 3: Foster awareness of sustainability and social justice beyond the curriculum**

Number of organizations with active relationships with the Center for Community-Based Learning and Action	Director of the Center for Community-Based Learning and Action (CCBLA)
Number of active student organizations specifically involved in sustainability and social justice	Director of Student Activities
Percentage of new residential students who participate in sustainability training and education	Director of Residential and Dining Services
Percentage of new students who participate in Community-to-Community Day during orientation	Director of the Center for Community-Based Learning and Action (CCBLA)

### **Rationale for Objective: Foster awareness of sustainability and social justice beyond the curriculum (Maintain)**

In this objective, the educational mission associated with sustainability expands beyond the curriculum to the broader community, exemplifying aspirations to link theory and practice and assure awareness in students beyond the purely academic realm. The college will maintain a range of activities, as supported by the charge of the Sustainability Council, which engage the entire campus community in learning about and addressing issues of sustainability and social justice. The college will explore new means of documenting the impact or quality of relationships between the campus and external community organizations in order to deepen understanding of those external relationships. Activities supporting this objective will take varied forms from year to year, facilitating the ability to respond to rapidly changing best practices and student interests. The college needs to better document such activities and relationships in the future. Evergreen will remain committed to supporting academic program engagement in meaningful work with community organizations, raising awareness of

sustainability in our campus community and beyond, and providing opportunities for active participation in sustainability and social justice activities.

### **Core Theme Four: Diversity and Equity**

As a public institution, Evergreen promotes and benefits from a diverse, just and equitable society. The capacity for personal and societal change is enhanced when the experience of difference prompts reflection. The college facilitates learning across significant differences through its curricular and co-curricular offerings, recruitment and retention efforts, and the overall governance and operation of the college. Specific curricula and facilities offer distinctive programs that serve diverse students from the region and beyond, while the curriculum at large demonstrates broad and deep commitment to learning about and across differences. These values are actualized through the connection of theory to practice as expressed in community service and civic activism. The Olympia and Tacoma campuses physically communicate hospitality and welcome to diverse students and visitors. The college as a whole strives to maintain access to higher education and support the success of a diverse student body. Extended curricula such as the Reservation-Based, Evening & Weekend Studies and Grays Harbor programs encourage wider access and participation. Outreach programs facilitate greater connections for underserved populations. College-wide activities, training and initiatives such as the President’s Diversity Fund, the Diversity & Equity Committee, the annual Day of Absence/Day of Presence, VETS Team, the Native Cases Project, and Access Services for Students with Disabilities support a complex campus culture and promote dialogue and discourse across significant differences in all parts of the college and its offerings.

#### **Objective 1: Learning across significant differences**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Source</b>
Percentage of programs that address oppression, privilege, and difference	End-of-Program Review and graduate directors
Students will engage across significant differences as evidenced by the NSSE Diversity Scale	National Survey of Student Engagement (with peer reference to other Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges)
Alumni level of skill in ability to work in a culturally diverse environment and how much they attribute their preparation in this area to their Evergreen education	Alumni Survey
Alumni satisfaction with seminar (satisfaction with the social climate in seminar; satisfaction with seminars as a way of learning)	Evergreen Student Experience Survey

#### **Rationale for Objective: Learning across significant differences (Maintain)**

Evergreen seeks to maintain the high levels of ability to work in culturally diverse environments reported by alumni and their attribution of that capacity to their Evergreen education. Seminar is a cornerstone pedagogical practice, thus it is good to note that there have been recent increases in student satisfaction with both the social climate of seminar as well as seminar as a way of

learning. Currently, nearly 80 percent of Evergreen programs address oppression, privilege and difference and Evergreen will strive to sustain student access to this critical area. Evergreen has historically exceeded its public liberal arts peers in terms of diversity indicators from the National Survey of Student Engagement. Evergreen students more frequently participate in serious discussions with people very different than themselves, are more likely to do coursework that includes diverse perspectives, and recognize Evergreen’s commitment to diverse interactions among students. Evergreen will strive to continue to exceed its public liberal arts peers on NSSE diversity scale indicators.

**Objective 2: Supportive community**

Alumni satisfaction with tolerance and respect shown for different or opposing viewpoints	Alumni Survey
For WA resident students: grants, scholarships and waivers as a percentage of total financial aid award for three categories of Estimated Family Contribution (EFC)	Director of Financial Aid
Percentage of faculty, staff and students of color (with peer reference)	Administrative data/IPEDS
Percentage of faculty, staff and students with reported disabilities	Administrative data
Percentage of faculty, staff and students who are veterans	Administrative data

**Rationale for Objective: Supportive community (Improve)**

Alumni satisfaction with tolerance and respect for opposing viewpoints has improved in the past three alumni surveys. The increasing diversity of the student body and ongoing commitment of college resources to improving the campus climate for diversity may have contributed to these indications of improvement. In the face of rapid increases in tuition and a decline in the availability of state aid, and with increasing diversity in state demographics, Evergreen remains committed to accessibility for its Washington residents. Evergreen will endeavor to sustain grant aid as a percentage of total financial aid to maintain access for low- and middle-income students and Evergreen will continue its institutional commitment to the recruitment, retention and support of diverse faculty, staff and students. These commitments will be maintained in the face of budget cuts, which drive greater dependence on nonresident recruitment and higher tuition revenues. Representation of people of color, veterans and persons with disabilities will be tracked to facilitate research into diversity relative to the workforce and state population. The proportion of faculty and staff in these categories will be compared to the proportion of students in traditionally underserved populations in order to work toward the most supportive environment for student success.

**Objective 3: Student access and success**

Percentage of entering class who are low-income students	Administrative data
Percentage of enrolled students who are low-income students	Administrative data
Fall-to-fall retention of low-income students	Administrative data
Percentage of degrees awarded to low-income students	Administrative data

### **Rationale for Objective: Student access and success (Maintain)**

As mentioned above, demographic composition affects the climate of inclusiveness. The college will maintain access and success of low-income students as indicated by recent trends in terms of the proportion of entering class, student body, and degrees awarded to low-income students. Fall-to-fall retention of low-income students already exceeds the retention rate of all students; the college will strive to sustain retention rates for low-income students that are equal to or greater than the general student body.

## **Section IV: Conclusion**

Despite unprecedented reductions in state support and an increased reliance on tuition revenue, Evergreen remains committed to its defining identity as both a public institution—in the sense of broad access, a diverse academic community and a focus on serving the public good—and a liberal arts college. Within that overall sense of institutional identity and purpose, the academic community is also convinced that the distinctive way in which that education is delivered, as articulated in the Five Foci, is critical to success.

Well aware that its chosen approach presents unique challenges, the college strives for a balance between extraordinary student responsibility for determining personal academic pathways and an institutional commitment to promote the breadth and depth of a liberal education. Evergreen determined at the outset that exercising the right to determine one's aspirations, one's work, should be part of the college experience. At the same time, the college must do what is possible to assure that the student attains the capacities to succeed in a variety of aspirations.

To increase the possibility that such “utopian freedom” (as one of our founding faculty members framed it) will be exercised responsibly, it is the college's duty to provide substantial guidance in the form of effective advising; to require that students be able to reflect upon and communicate their choices; and to offer a curriculum that will make it possible to achieve the liberal arts capacities of thought and action as expressed in the Six Expectations.

The objectives and indicators selected in this report provide the tools for identifying and assessing progress in these specific realms. By pursuing these objectives, Evergreen focuses its efforts on developing an institutional culture and structures that will increase the ability of students to not only identify their dreams, but to responsibly and successfully pursue them both in college and beyond.