

Shaping Our Future: Building on Our Past

Strategic Plan 2015-2020



**the evergreen
state college**

About This Plan

This plan outlines six overarching goals intended to help the College achieve the aspirations of the mission, vision, and core themes. Each is described with related objectives and strategies. Much of the detail for these aspirations and their measures of success is contained within our [Year-Three Accreditation Report](#). Additional assessment intentions are described at the end of this plan.

The work required to achieve these goals will be pursued across the College, largely through existing teams and structures accountable for specific areas of work. Success will depend on the engagement and contributions of the entire Evergreen community.

Winter 2015

Introduction: A Plan to Build on Our Strengths

The Evergreen State College embraces many of the foundations of a traditional liberal arts education:

- Exceptional teaching and one-on-one engagement with students;
- An emphasis on developing writing, speaking, collaboration, and critical thinking skills;
- An emphasis on breadth and depth of knowledge; and
- A focus on citizenship, social justice, service, and preparation for work and career.

Evergreen reaches beyond the traditional to serve students in ways that distinguish it from other liberal arts institutions.

Critically, Evergreen is public; one of just a handful of such liberal arts institutions in the country, providing access to a much broader range of students than its private counterparts and focused on serving the public good.

Its greatest distinction, however, is that Evergreen approaches teaching and learning in a fundamentally different way than most colleges and universities, offering students:

- Interdisciplinary, multi-quarter and team-taught programs;
- Engaging classroom and hands-on learning opportunities, anchored upon a deep trust in the talents and creativity of faculty;
- Substantive narrative evaluations of their learning; and
- Freedom, and responsibility, to choose and help create academic pathways tailored to their personal, academic, and career goals.

These characteristics set Evergreen apart and provide students with learning opportunities not available elsewhere.

Our Mission

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.

Our Vision

In 2020, we envision an Evergreen that:

- Serves a student body of Washington residents that reflects the diversity of our state, in all its forms, enhanced by students from beyond the state and nation;
- Is a destination college of choice for students, faculty, and staff seeking a liberal arts experience;
- Has a vibrant sense of shared community, mutual respect, and common purpose with a continued commitment to social justice and sustainability;
- Provides a distinctive, innovative, and relevant educational experience—strongly grounded in the Five Foci and Six Expectations—that helps students graduate, achieve their personal and careers goals, and become effective global citizens;
- Is actively and strategically engaged with the community in mutually beneficial ways;
- Is an institution in which the community takes great pride;
- Is known locally, regionally, nationally, and globally as a model for teaching and learning and an example of the strengths and benefits of a liberal arts education; and
- Continues to transform student lives so that those students can transform the world.

Core Themes

Evergreen's four core themes, intended to encompass the essential elements of the mission, were developed in the College's ongoing accreditation work and can be reviewed in detail in the [Year-Three Accreditation Report](#).

The core themes are:

- Integrated, interdisciplinary learning;
- Individuals engaged in community;

Five Foci

- Interdisciplinary study
- Collaborative learning
- Learning across significant differences
- Personal engagement
- Linking theory to practice

Six Expectations

- 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; and
- Demonstrate depth, breadth, and synthesis of learning and the ability to reflect on the personal and social significance of that learning.

- Environmental stewardship and social justice; and
- Diversity and equity.

These themes are deeply woven into this strategic plan. The plan also includes institutional goals, objectives, and strategies to help focus our resources and achieve the aspirations articulated in the mission, vision, and core themes.

Who We Serve

As a public institution, Evergreen serves both students and society.

More specifically, Evergreen aims to serve a student body comprised primarily of Washington residents representative of state demographics, enhanced by students from beyond the state and nation who contribute diversity of background, and experience to our academic endeavors and financial resources to support our mission as a public institution.

How We Serve Students

Evergreen provides an academic experience—characterized by the Five Foci and demonstrated in the Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate—that prepares students to successfully pursue their personal, academic, and career goals.

How We Serve Society

Evergreen produces graduates who possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to engage in graduate studies and/or lifelong learning and contribute as citizens, economically and socially. The College identifies, prioritizes and pursues current and new strategic partnerships—across the spectrum of non-profit, government, and private enterprise on the local, national and global level—that are mutually beneficial and based on an exchange of knowledge, talent, and resources. In doing these things, Evergreen demonstrates the value of a liberal arts education.

Our Commitments

- A commitment to strengthening and enhancing rigorous, well-taught undergraduate and graduate education, founded on the Five Foci, the Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate and the acknowledgement of student goals and aspirations, including preparation for work and service.
- A commitment to hiring, developing, promoting, and retaining faculty members who are excellent teachers—as well as leaders in scholarship, the arts, and professional accomplishment—and actively contribute to the vitality and vision of Evergreen.
- A commitment to hiring, developing, promoting, and retaining staff members who excel in their areas of work and actively contribute to the vitality and vision of Evergreen.

- A commitment to working with student populations and communities, such as the Tacoma and Native American communities, to enhance educational opportunities aligned with Evergreen’s mission, vision, and goals.
- A commitment to promoting teaching, scholarship, and artistic opportunities within and across traditional disciplinary boundaries.
- A commitment to strengthening and expanding the College’s local, regional, national, and global connections through academics and public service.
- A commitment to enhancing our residential campus and co-curricular experiences for our students.
- A commitment to aligning our policies, processes, services, operations, and the development of our physical campus with our values as expressed in our mission, vision, and core themes.
- A commitment to supporting financially sustainable operating and capital budgets aligned with the values expressed in this strategic plan and built on a foundation of enrollment-based revenue, legislative funding, and fundraising.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Goals in Brief

1. Energize Evergreen’s distinctive educational experience.
2. Recruit, develop, and retain outstanding faculty and staff.
3. Effectively employ technology, facilities, and the natural attributes of our campus to enhance teaching, learning, and community.
4. Build and strengthen mutually beneficial partnerships with internal and external stakeholders.
5. Ensure enrollments and revenues sufficient to achieve the College’s vision.
6. Enhance recognition of Evergreen as an extraordinary institution locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

Goal 1

Energize Evergreen’s distinctive educational experience

Objective 1: Using the expertise of the faculty, refine and refresh curriculum and pedagogy, building upon academic strengths to further support student success

Strategies

1. Use the Five Foci, Six Expectations, and core themes as primary lenses for individual and collective academic planning.
2. Explore the value and methods of improving first-year experiences and providing meaningful capstone experiences for all students.
3. Provide clearer and consistently available academic pathways to facilitate student agency and help students achieve their personal and career goals.
4. Take advantage of Evergreen's curricular flexibility to provide programs and classes that attract and engage students, deepen their learning, and support their success after graduation.
5. Increase theory to practice opportunities.
6. Assess and address the college-level academic capabilities of incoming students.
7. Use feedback from end-of-program assessments to design high quality programs and contracts.

Objective 2: Enhance faculty's capacity for mentoring students and involving them in scholarly and artistic activities

Strategies

1. Encourage and support collaborative/team teaching—especially across academic divisions.
2. Provide faculty with opportunities to hone their skills in working with a diverse student body.
3. Stimulate opportunities for collaborative faculty-student scholarship and artistic work.
4. Facilitate opportunities for faculty to engage in discussions with peers to share successful pedagogical and professional practices.
5. Provide additional support for faculty mentoring to facilitate student success inside and outside the classroom.

Goal 2

Recruit, develop, and retain outstanding faculty and staff to support student success and sustain the College's aspirations for diversity

Objective 1: Improve the College's competitive position in terms of total compensation, working environment, development opportunities, and visibility

Strategies

1. Develop competitive, equitable, and sustainable compensation and employee development plans.
2. Develop and implement efforts to attract and retain faculty and staff who reflect, and are capable of supporting, Evergreen's diverse student body.
3. Cultivate a welcoming and supportive campus environment.

Goal 3

Effectively employ technology, facilities, and the natural attributes of our campus to create and sustain an inclusive, accessible, and safe environment that will attract and serve students, inspire and support teaching and learning, build community, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of College operations.

Objective 1: Develop, renovate, and maintain critical campus facilities

Strategies

1. Pursue and secure legislative authorization and funding for projects and facilities included in the 2015 to 2020 elements of the Campus Master Plan.
2. Continue active engagement with students to explore, promote, fund, and implement improvements to the College Recreation Center within the time frame of this plan.
3. Explore potential improvements and/or expansion of campus housing and student service facilities, and funding options (including exploration of public/private partnerships), to better meet student needs and support recruitment and retention goals.

Objective 2: Provide technology and support to promote learning and improve efficiency and effectiveness of campus operations

Strategies

1. Identify and implement solutions to provide mobile/responsive/remote access to information and functionality for students, faculty, and staff.
2. Continue efforts to maintain and improve data security.
3. Identify, prioritize, and address barriers to access, and opportunities to enhance learning, for students, faculty, and staff (e.g. technology, training, support, organization, physical access, and ease of use).

Objective 3: Develop and implement an improved plan, grounded in environmental stewardship and social justice, to help the College clarify and achieve its sustainability goals

Strategies

1. Actively engage students, faculty, and staff in an update of the Climate Action Plan, including review and recommendations related to carbon and waste reduction goals and timelines.
2. Review and, as necessary revise, the roles of the Sustainability Council, Sustainability Coordinator, and sustainability-related student groups in relation to achieving the goals of an updated Climate Action Plan.
3. Emphasize the continued integration of social justice and sustainability into the curriculum.
4. Provide additional theory to practice opportunities for students and a model for sustainability that contributes to student recruitment, learning, and retention.

Goal 4

Build and strengthen mutually beneficial partnerships with internal and external stakeholders

Objective 1: Build, strengthen, and maintain strategic internal and external partnerships that enhance student success and contribute to the long term ability of the College to fulfill its mission.

Strategies

1. Build on key existing initiatives through deeper support, strategic alignment, and recognition of partnership efforts to increase external funding, expand impact, raise visibility, and leverage additional partnerships and support.
2. Identify and implement clear and effective means for external stakeholders to connect with Evergreen to explore opportunities for strategic partnerships.
3. Develop methods to build internal awareness of existing partnerships, opportunities, and needs, improve coordination, and increase synergy.
4. Identify and support current and new partnerships—across the spectrum of non-profit, government, and private enterprise on the local, national and global level—that are mutually beneficial and based on an exchange of knowledge, talent and resources; expand experiential, theory to practice opportunities that enhance student engagement, learning, career readiness, and connections to campus and community; and contribute to sustainability, social justice, and quality of life in the community and beyond.

Goal 5

Ensure enrollments and revenue sufficient to achieve the College's vision

Objective 1: Attract students who can most benefit from and contribute to the Evergreen learning community

Strategies

1. Increase the size of the undergraduate applicant pool through additional targeted outreach that reflects the demographics of the state, enhanced by students from beyond the state and nation.
2. Implement system and technology updates to improve efficiency and effectiveness of admissions/recruitment efforts.
3. Refine marketing messages to increase the continuity and effectiveness of communication and bolster promotional efforts to further showcase Evergreen's distinctions and successes.
4. Sustain support for graduate programs and explore opportunities for growth and/or diversification of graduate offerings in alignment with the mission and vision.
5. Enlist students, faculty, staff, and alumni in supporting recruitment and messaging efforts.
6. Expand financial aid to increase affordability and support student recruitment.

Objective 2: Retain and graduate a higher percentage of students

Strategies

1. Engage with students and focus institutional energy to assess, prioritize and, as necessary, enhance academic, social, recreational, and health-related services, activities and facilities that support student success.
2. Identify, prioritize, fund and spread effective retention practices already in use at Evergreen to additional student populations and explore effective practices not yet in use here for possible implementation.
3. Critically review practices currently funded based on assumed retention benefits to confirm that linkage. Revisit rationale or discontinue these investments if they don't deliver the desired benefits.

Objective 3: Generate a sustainable balance of legislative, tuition-based, and private funding to support current programming, financial aid, and aspirations for new initiatives articulated in the vision and core themes

Strategies

1. Clarify institutional fundraising priorities and expand fundraising activities to support student access and success.
2. Enhance legislative outreach and advocacy activities, engaging a wider range of stakeholders in these efforts.
3. Increase enrollment-related revenue in line with demographic goals.

Goal 6

Enhance recognition of Evergreen as an extraordinary institution locally, regionally, nationally, and globally

Objective 1: Make accomplishments of students, faculty, staff, and alumni more widely known

Strategies

1. Showcase more student, faculty, staff, institutional, and alumni accomplishments for internal and external audiences.
2. Support publication efforts, conference presentations, and other opportunities to help shape national and international conversations about educational practices by highlighting Evergreen's unique pedagogy, faculty innovations, and student successes.
3. Provide more support for student presentations and posters at professional meetings.
4. Enhance the visibility of the public service centers and their work and integrate them more with academic programs and courses.
5. Develop ways for students, faculty and staff to better understand, fully articulate, and broadly share the goals, values and benefits of our innovative liberal arts education.

Objective 2: Strengthen lifelong alumni engagement

Strategies

1. Bring alumni back to campus by creating engaging special events and nourishing their ties to faculty.
2. Develop in-person activities and digital tools to promote continued social interaction and ongoing learning.
3. Expand connections between students and alumni for mutual benefit.
4. Expand opportunities for alumni engagement and advocacy on behalf of the college.

Objective 3: Demonstrate the value of a liberal arts education

Strategies

1. Refine and demonstrate the strengths of Evergreen's interdisciplinary model in supporting student success.
2. Widely communicate Evergreen's successes (through student, faculty, staff, and alumni stories) and their linkage to the College's distinctive liberal arts model.
3. Lead and/or actively participate in regional and national engagements with key stakeholders on the value and relevance of a liberal arts education.

Assessment

Most of the goals and objectives included in this plan reflect and/or integrate the core themes articulated in Evergreen's Year-Three Accreditation Report. That report includes specific indicators and targets for a wide range of activities, initiatives, and outcomes. The College will use those indicators and targets to assess progress toward goals related directly to the core themes.

For goals and/or objectives in this plan that are not specifically included in the accreditation framework, the College will document current status, compare that status to our future aspirations, set specific targets and milestones, and monitor over time to assess progress and/or determine changes necessary to achieve those goals.

Process

In winter 2014, the Board of Trustees charged a Strategic Planning Steering Committee to conduct a strategic planning process that would yield an updated strategic plan for 2015-2020. As it gathered information and began drafting language, the Committee sought input and feedback from students, staff, faculty, alumni, and community members in spring, summer, and fall 2014. Grounding its work in the College's mission and the core themes developed in Evergreen's ongoing [accreditation process](#), drawing on insights and recommendations from additional past work (including the Curricular Visions DTF, Re-modeling Teaching and Learning at Evergreen DTF, the Long Range Curriculum DTF, and the Campus Master Plan, among others), and responding to the wide range of feedback, the Committee developed a vision and a strategic plan to guide the institution over the next five years.