

FULL REPORT: Why Do Some Students of Color Stay at Evergreen, and Why Do Some Leave Evergreen?

Focus groups with students of color, conducted in May, 2014 Diversity and Equity Standing Committee, The Evergreen State College

As a part of a larger effort to learn how better Evergreen can support the 25% students of color on the Evergreen campuses, four members of the Diversity and Equity Standing Committee conducted three 2-hour focus groups in May of 2014, with 21 (please confirm) students of color.

The topic of the focus group was why some students of color choose to leave Evergreen before finishing their degree, and why some stay. Three main questions were posed to students:

Why did you choose Evergreen and what keeps you here?

What have you heard from students of color about why they left Evergreen before graduation?

What recommendations do you have to support the retention of students of color?

The groups were led by Raquel Salinas, Coordinator of Student Support Programs, First Peoples Multicultural Advising Services, and Felix Braffith, Director of KEY Student Services. Students were recruited through email and personal contacts. Informed consent was obtained, and students were compensated with \$20 and pizza. Further details about how the focus groups were conducted, including the focus group guide, can be found at the end of this report.

This full report is intended to capture the full breadth and depth of the students' remarks. A briefer, condensed version, the "Executive Summary" captures the highlights and main messages of the focus groups.

Analysis and contents of the focus groups

Four members of the Diversity and Equity Standing Committee (Raquel Salinas, Felix Braffith, Carolyn Prouty (Faculty) and Jennifer Rodriguez (Research Project Coordinator, Institutional Research) analyzed the focus group transcripts thusly. Each focus group was transcribed (removing names and other identifying information), and then read by 3 of the 4 members of the group. Major and minor themes were identified by each member, and differences were resolved by consensus. Illustrative quotes were then identified by each member, and Carolyn Prouty compiled these data into the two summaries, with oversight and approval by the entire group.

Focus group data, in general, are intended to capture the breadth of viewpoints more than to quantify the extent to which more or fewer participants share those views. Thus this report conveys all comments that were made, in order to capture all of what was shared, and to honor their stories. The "Executive Summary" is substantially shorter, and quotes that capture the essence of multiple students are noted; along with a tally of similar comments.

From this analysis, five major themes were found. These themes did not neatly answer the questions above, but as they do represent five areas of the college wherein action steps might be enacted, these themes were chosen as the best way to represent the data collected.

The five themes, and sub-themes, are listed below; the data are divided by themes but not sub-themes. Included within each theme are BOTH:

- things that are working/things students like, and
- things that aren't working, and may be driving students away, and recommendations to address what isn't working.

1. Academic “fit” and physical structures: What fits my learning and what doesn't:

- seminar (*comments about seminar that are not related to faculty*)
- ILCs
- Housing

Working: pp. 3-8; Not working/recommendations: pp. 8-16

2. Faculty

- Faculty training/development, need for it
- Specific things faculty do and don't do that support or undermine students, including in seminar
- Faculty hiring

Working: pp. 17-18; Not working/recommendations: pp. 19-25

3. Connection to Campus:

- Academic and Support Services: First Peoples, TRiO, KEY, QuASR, Writing Center
- Student Activities
- Informal student activities, gathering places

Working: pp. 26-31; Not working/recommendations: pp. 32-37

4. Culture Sensitivity

- Experiences of students with racism, classism, other isms, and privilege, including micro aggressions,
- Pressure to assimilate, loss of identity
- Lack of cultural competency in faculty, staff, students, including myth of post-racial society
- Variations in identity development of students, staff, faculty
- Ally training, how allies have been helpful, not helpful

Not working/recommendations: pp. 38-55

5. Finances

- Financial aid as key to keeping students in school
- Barriers/aids in access
- Racism in hiring students of color on campus, in Olympia

Working: pp. 56; Not working/recommendations: pp. 56-58

I: Academic “fit” and physical structures: What fits my learning and what doesn’t:

- seminar (*comments about seminar that are not related to faculty*)
- ILCs
- housing

ACADEMIC FIT: WHAT IS WORKING

I like Evergreen’s academic community.

For a couple years off and on, when I had lived in Olympia, I had gotten to know and just had a lot of really great experiences with the campus community here. I was making the transition from a rough spot in life and part of doing that was me going to college and Evergreen really was able to offer me a step up in that way.

I was definitely very accepted, I felt, and when I went in to talk to the admissions officer, it was a really positive experience and my experiences like hitchhiking and other sorts of travel were just looked upon as a great thing, “You’ve gone out and seen the world.”

I definitely did have some questions after spending a few years out of high school whether or not I’d be able to keep up with the normal college environment where it’s very competitive and where they have very strict grades and very narrow expectations, and I already knew a lot of people who went here and was very excited about the course offerings and about the academic freedom.

I came to Evergreen because I went to a really kind of rural high school north of here, it was really conservative and had this really kind of suffocating environment that was really based on, as many high schools are, like this really standard way of -- well, standardized way of going to school and how you should take classes. And I had classes that were not interesting, I’m terrible at math, always had a hard time with math. So, on the fact that Evergreen was close, like here I could stay around my family but also go to an environment that was pretty much the opposite of this high school that was, for lack of a better word, kind of like a redneck kind of place that really didn’t feel good to be at.

I feel like a lot of really hard conversations happen here that are really hard to find in a lot of traditional public schools. So, I really appreciate that.

I feel like if I did leave, it would be to go to another institution, but I just don’t -- that just wouldn’t -- I feel like I wouldn’t fit well in another institution at this point. And then I also feel like I’ve committed so much of my time and energy into this degree that I owe it to myself to finish it, and then, also I recognize that I have like more growth to do and that Evergreen is a really great place for that.

I have a really close friend who talks often about how they were really interested in leaving a lot, and then they say the thing that saved them were **ILCs**. Because specifically the seminar space was so unsafe. They were part of Gateways and they found that even in Gateways, there were a lot of students that were not up to par with their anti-oppression work. And so, they just kind of said no to programs for a while and did ILCs and then they also recommend working with -- they said Chico was like the greatest person to work with, but working with faculty of color on ILCs.

I wanted that change in environment and I like the idea that I can just go and study whatever I feel like I need to study or want to study without having to go around different obstacles.

I'm from a smaller town and it was really safe and comfortable growing up, but as I got older and moved to different places, I lived in Colorado and just had a lot of experiences and I realized I want to go definitely away from Ohio. So, I looked into Evergreen, it was recommended to me because I wasn't interested in bigger universities where it was like 400 students with 1 professor. I wanted something intimate.

It wasn't until my senior year that I chose -- Evergreen was one of my choices. It was either that or a community college, and it wasn't until Felix and other TriO advisors came to me and spoke to me. It was like, "Evergreen is really a choice that you can make and it can happen." After seeing how low tuition was, then having Felix there to help me out and other people that I knew, I was like, "Yeah, this is the place for me."

I'm still here because I felt welcomed by a large community of people. [...] Whenever I come here, I just feel welcomed. And being in seminars and having my voice heard, and never feeling like I couldn't speak out on anything that I felt was bothering me. Being able to point out elephants in the room without anybody coming at me after class, whatever I felt was oppressing me at the time was -- has been a great experience.

Sometimes there's a program that I really like a third of it's a fulltime program, but having to deal with all the extra stuff is kind of frustrating. And I know that's kind of Evergreen's core academic model, but it's -- for some people, I don't think that it really works out so much. And so, I think that we should offer more part-time programs because Evergreen has a lot of benefits besides its interdisciplinary classes. There are a lot of great reasons why somebody would want to stay attending Evergreen, but not all of them want to or can be fulltime students, and some of those people have been through traumatic events in their lives to where being a fulltime student is very strenuous for them or to where they might -- they've just been so stressed out and they've been in school for so long that they just need to spend some time not really accelerating that fast and deciding the next direction that they're going to go.

I really like the freedom to take different things that you're interested in and combine them and create a study out of that, and I don't think that -- a lot of the universities don't offer that. And I feel like the conversations that we have inside of class and outside of class are really intentional and really intense. ...I feel like people really learn from inside of class and outside of class, there's always really rich, intense conversations going on.

Also, in terms of recommendation, I think they should not limit the amount of ILCs, they're like independent credits. That's probably one of the more foolish moves they have ever made in the history of the institution, really. [Laughs] That's one of the reasons why people come here of all learning styles and then it's also a form of support for students. Yeah, I think it's just really important that they do not limit the amount. And also, you know that that's an option if you don't feel safe in classes.

And also, another thing was that my senior year, I was failing trig and other schools were like -- they were really pushing me to explain and Evergreen wasn't as aggressive with that. They were like, "You have all your required classes to graduate, you don't have to explain to us why you didn't do so well in trigonometry when it's not part of the required classes, and I really liked that.

And also, talking to other friends of mine at other institutions and the kind of experiences that I'm doing aren't really comparable to them, and I think I'm gaining a lot more of the real world here than at another institution.

And really, the interdisciplinary programs here is what I decided to stay. I found out I could do an independent learning contract, so I went that route. I just took a whole quarter and just really -- just did what I wanted to do and focused on [the] Palestine and Israel conflict and did an internship. Just being able to work outside of the community, but also get credit was really awesome and it really fueled me to continue going here because I kind of found a voice that I never really -- I had, but I just never felt like I could use.

And so Evergreen, the interdisciplinary way in which you can focus on different aspects of what you're interested in without having to necessarily go to these -- have these prerequisites or these things that are attached to what you're trying to study. Like math, that would've made college really more difficult than I felt like it needed to be. And also, I was looking at Evergreen because the sense of [inaudible], like in the structure itself, like with the Longhouse here is like a really important aspect to this school and how Native Peoples can -- there's a visibility to these structures, but also like a sense of welcoming in that way as well. So, those are some of the reasons I came to Evergreen.

Evergreen is a step where you can take that and change your life and study what you want and how you want and whenever you want to do it. With the ILCs, the Independent Learning Contracts, and the other -- because you can do an internship somewhere and still get credit for that. I think that's amazing at this college.

I also really love that we are on a property with very large, expansive woods.

I came to Evergreen because going through traditional classes at the community college, I learned how to play the game, so I wasn't learning and I knew that, but I was still passing classes and that wasn't making me happy. And I also think I had a unique field of study, so it was really attractive that I could create my own pathway

I came to Evergreen because I had several alumni recommend the school to me who were doing nonprofit work in Seattle and they had gone to Evergreen as nontraditional students, and as someone who had been to multiple schools before and the traditional institutions didn't work for me, I really liked the interdisciplinary approach.

I came to Evergreen because I liked the idea that you could sort of get into whatever academic field you wanted to as soon as you got here. And I kind of in high school knew which academic field I wanted to go to. I want to start like a political economy social justice thing, and especially I was told that like Olympia and Evergreen is a very politically and socially progressive area and school, so that's something that really attracted me to this school.

I came to Evergreen because I wanted a higher education and I was told about the cool academic structure, doing the evaluations and things with that nature.

I came to Evergreen because I wasn't really sure about coming to college at all and my college counselor convinced me that this was a good fit for me because of the interdisciplinary classes and the non-mandatory classes.

I came to Evergreen because there are no grades and seminar. I also came because every quarter I was sweating what the GPA was and that was too much to be worried about and try to get my lessons in because they total your GPA throughout the quarter and you need to do this, this, and this to make -- and I don't want to stress over doing the work and worried about my GPA. And also, because I was freshly released from being incarcerated after 14 years and I did not know how to acclimate to a school environment.

I love how small Evergreen is. I love that the population is around 20,000. I grew up in a small town. So, I like being able to -- I've been able to build really awesome communities here and I think the resources on campus help students build communities here so they feel like -- I mean, in general, within seminar spaces, you don't want to go to seminar if you didn't read a book because

you're kind of like letting down the whole program. So, it's a motivator and it's inspiring to push yourself. And at a school like Evergreen, you have to push yourself in a way to do all this independent work. So, I guess I love the small knit community aspect that this school has.

I love the conversations that happen at Evergreen because some people don't know what things are going on and I've taken a lot of outlaw, race, culture classes and it's just -- the conversations that go on are really intense and people learn and you build more community and it's really awesome to be able to walk through campus and see a lot of people that you know and recognize and you can smile. And it's comforting to be able to walk on campus and know people, not just be surrounded by a whole bunch of people who are trying to get straight A's.

I originally went to a Historically Black Women's College in Atlanta, Georgia, called Spelman. So, I've had a very unique experience. Although it was great, I realized that I wasn't learning the way that I needed to and I wanted to be able to get a lot of hands-on experience to prepare me for a career, and I was attracted no grades because I wanted to be able to be evaluated and know what my strengths and weaknesses were in the classroom and be able to do internships and be able to just direct my own education and not feel like I had just hit all these bullet points that someone said I needed to do.

I think my favorite thing is the way some of the programs are structured, that those communities, that you work with the same people throughout your academic experience, which I think fosters a great -- although group work can always be difficult, I think at Evergreen, it's one of the more positive experiences I've had with group work, so that's one of my favorite things.

I think that's what saved me, is last year I did... the whole year for all internships.

I wanted to check out other schools in the state and since I wanted to study psychology and didn't really study psychology from a kind of a textbook definition, I didn't really want to be that kind of psychologist so I wanted a more broad view of psychology. So, I came here.

I wanted to study sustainability and I want do cultural studies as well, and a lot of traditional universities, you couldn't combine the two. I felt like it was -- I just felt like a lot of other schools didn't take into account why environmental science also needs to be -- like culture really needs to be taken into account. And they were like, "You could double" -- only you have two majors, but you could never combine them. My homeroom teacher my senior year told me about Evergreen because I had never heard about it before, actually, and I looked through the classes and they looked really amazing, and the fact that you could have interdisciplinary studies.

I went to a high school that had like a total of eight Black people in it. My senior year, I finally became okay with being different and my brother actually was graduating from Evergreen and he had taken the African Woman's Experience class and every time he came home, he was telling me about it and telling me how much he learned and how he was dancing and all these things. I was so intrigued. I had never thought that cultural studies was something that I was interested in, but more and more as I became more self-aware and more comfortable with who I was becoming and who I was supposed to be, I wanted to come to Evergreen. It was a burning fire that I just knew I had to come.

I would have to say like the physical campus I really like it. I live on campus so it's like living in the woods. So, I don't know it's kind of cool. Yeah, it's really scenic and nice around here.

I would just say that the class structure of being smaller makes it so that you have more one-on-one time with your faculty and you can get more of a personalized education because they will specifically say stuff toward you based on what you want to do individually, instead of just saying -- just teaching you and lecturing you, you can kind of have more input.

The reason that I'm still at Evergreen, and I have thought about leaving many times last year because I -- I really didn't see the benefits in staying at Evergreen because at first, I was like, "Eh, I don't know, I don't see why I'm doing... We're in seminar, why seminar? What's seminar for?" And really, I went through my first quarter at Evergreen and I had a program teacher that really took things, and he's been here for a while, and took things step-by-step and the program was really laid out well. It made me realize that I had learned a lot more in that one quarter than I had in a whole year at community college. That really made me realize I should really stay at this college, and it also helps that I have a whole bunch of friends here and I've built a community here, and I'm an athlete here and I'm doing sports. And that's why I'm still at Evergreen.

It's green.

My favorite thing about Evergreen is how you are in charge of your own education here. I mean, you drive your own vehicle here and you can determine what you take out of it, and whether you want to take it easy or if you want to take as difficult classes as you want. Right now, I'm in science classes and it's probably the most difficult thing that I've done in college so far, and I've challenged myself and I went through this year and kept on going at it, kept on going at it and my program teachers have been very supportive and kept on urging me along and giving me that positive reinforcement that I'm doing just -- I'm doing exactly what I'm supposed to be doing. It has really helped me to get through this year and the year-long program that I have been in.

My favorite thing about Evergreen is the environment, like it's small community, so in classes, I get to know the people that I'm in class with and I'll know the teachers better.

You don't have to take predetermined classes to graduate. You don't have to take like Math 1 or English or whatever, you can take whatever you want and you can still get a degree.

One of my other equally favorite things is just that you're not skimming the surface of topics. Instead of just being in a class and learning the basics, you're able to get really in-depth and look at it from variety of perspectives, so [you are] gaining knowledge and internalizing the information as opposed to just learning it for a second and then taking a test.

Out of the graduate schools I applied to Evergreen was the one that took me, but it also had a really interesting program nonetheless because of its whole thing about -- especially for graduate school, it's not really a grading system. So, it really encourages you as a graduate student that it's up to you what you make of your graduate studies. So, there really are opportunities with it if you do the research on your own, and if you don't, that's up to you.

The interdisciplinary academics was definitely the first thing that brought me here, and I was really interested in learning how to express my artistic self in a very different way than the models that are already out there.

This seems like exactly what I need to find out what my academic capabilities really are and not have other people tell me what I can and cannot do.

Utilize the ability that we have here to do independent study, spend at least a quarter studying something that you're passionate about. Study something that maybe at another school you wouldn't be allowed to study.

When I came to the campus I noticed that people were making efforts to be a lot more inclusive. There just seemed a lot more progressive attitude at Evergreen, more so than other colleges I've been too. And I just really didn't get the vibe here that it was competitive, or that it was this sort of a frat culture or anything like that.

Yeah, I think that why I came to Evergreen was the alternative curriculum style. Specifically, I think that I was really attracted by interdisciplinary classes because I like seeing the connections between different subjects, and I think that makes for more interesting conversations if you've seen those intersections. So, I think that was one of the big reasons.

Yeah, the fact that you can direct your own education, I was studying cultural anthropology and sociology before and felt like I couldn't dabble into other things because then I wouldn't graduate on time, so it's nice I can take psychology and economics and I can do all my interests, ceramics, whatever it is, and then still be able to get my degree in four years.

Yeah, there's so many things I love about Evergreen. I really, really love the academics. I found that each of my programs, or like the way that I've gone through different programs has been like, they've built on each other really well. So yeah, I've been able to find programs that are connecting the things that I've been most interested in for a long time, but had I been in another institution I would've had to take like separate four course classes about it, and now I'm in a program that integrates them all the time.

Probably my favorite thing at Evergreen is the fact that it's exposed to me to so many different opinions and philosophies and different fields, more so outside of class than when I was in class.

I also really like that -- I really like that the professor to student ratios are really small for a public university, I think that's really amazing. Because you usually only see that in private schools, and the ability to actually get to know your professor and sit down and have lunch, see them on Red Square have a conversation. I actually really like that we have evaluations instead of grades because I feel like it's more academically challenging than other traditional universities where it's not about just memorizing and passing your test and getting A's. It's about you have to be really actively present in your programs because you're going to get an evaluation written about yourself. So, it's not just an A. They're writing all this about you, so I feel like this school's really academically challenging. And I actually feel like it should have more academic credit than what it actually has, like outside of Evergreen people don't give it enough credit.

1. Academic "fit" and physical structures: What fits my learning and what doesn't

- seminar (*comments about seminar that are not related to faculty*)
- ILCs
- housing

ACADEMIC FIT: WHAT IS NOT WORKING & RECOMMENDATIONS

I feel like Evergreen is a really good place for people who need a second chance, but for people who are really just trying to get out there and explore, I feel like the idea of being nontraditional in the sense that you get to choose what you want to do or there's this kind of loose framework of what you're going to learn doesn't always help people. I feel like because of the limited options at Evergreen and how programs are offered three years in a row or one year in a row or here and there, I just feel like it's really hard to get your footing right if you haven't already stumbled and figured out what exactly works for you, what doesn't work for you, and what you like or what you don't like.

I think that they should have core classes available. It's more traditional, but just six credit classes at night, like for economics, for chemistry, for physics, whatever, so you can just get those prerequisites out of the way. And bigger classes, if a chemistry class is full and there's like a 24 waiting list, they should just open up another one or something.

[Recruiting for Evergreen] ...like have like actual students that are of color and youth, like specifically youth because the ones that are going through it and currently in school and doing it, if we take them to other schools, like other high schools and talk to those seniors and those seniors have like a panel with that person, they learn more about Evergreen. Whereas if they come here and they do a tour, they don't learn as much. They get to see stuff and they get to glance at it, but they don't really get to find out the hidden part of it because -- I got to glance at studios, but I didn't really get to know that you had to do all this in order to get into it. So, it would have been helpful if you're a musician and you're doing that to be like, "Oh, yeah. Well, you have to go through this first before you get to that," or then somebody's like, "How many people are on my campus?" and you as a student of color could be like, "There's not that many." You could give them a truthful answer instead of giving them kind of like highlight reel of this is what you see, this is what you get to see, and this is what you don't.

Seminar has felt like an isolating environment. I don't feel like I generally learn very much from seminar. I've found that most classes that I've been in that have had seminar, I've done a lot of independent learning contracts and some small credit classes, but I have spoken to people who have great seminar discussions, and I generally have dreaded seminar.

You're sort of trapped here sometimes because of the lack of GPA. If you don't finish your -- you could lose funding. If you have trouble with faculty, you're stuck with them for three, four months, and your financial aid is riding on it. So, you don't have a choice to opt out or to take that time out, take a week and go to the coast or whatever and surf. Some kids do that because they have the money and they have the freedom to do that.

And I also agree about the housing. As a student of color in the dorms, that was really difficult sometimes, especially because you're just getting a lot of young students that haven't had any sort of conversations or conversation about privilege or anything, and then even if they have, they're interested in [inaudible] a passing thing and looking like they're friends. So, yeah, I got like a lot -- it was not fun in the dorms.

Most of them [RAs] are white and most of them are at the end of their academic career. I know one African American RA. Yeah. So, I mean, Evergreen touts inclusiveness, but they're not a [making a] practice of it.

My bigger issue would be like the catalog and how Evergreen was marketed like, "Oh, you can graduate in this and we give classes with this and this and this," and then I get here expecting this class to be available and it's not.

...With academic planning, it's very difficult to navigate sort of getting prerequisites for graduate school and so, there's -- academic advising is not a requirement, it's sort of like you have to be a proactive student to find the faculty. I've approached every single faculty, and for example, in economics, I found a class that I needed and the response from almost every advisor was, "Take it as SPS," and no thought to their own, but that is a huge -- that is not okay for low income students because we don't have access to financial aid. I can't just drop \$800 for a class over at SPS because it's not offered here. That is not okay. And so, there's this idea that if I don't go to the academic fair and contact every single faculty member, that I'm not doing my job. And I don't know, yes, the education is in my hands, but I shouldn't have to constantly jump through leaps and bounds to -- just to meet my academic goals and needs.

And then I think the same with other subjects, like I know a lot of students that want to take programs here, but they have to take the prerequisites during the summer at SPSCC or another community college, so not having access to the prerequisite before they come in to the program. That's something I've heard a lot of people that I know being really frustrated where it's, "SPSCC isn't offering it this year and I can't even get into this program," and not even

having that option at Evergreen, it's like having to rely on another school to have that.

Probably not a good idea to live on campus is what I would probably say. I mean, if that's the only thing financially affordable for you at the time or whatever, I'm not going to advise against that, but then again, it isn't really that much -- it is actually more expensive to live on campus than off of campus, too. So, it's like if you actually do the cost [inaudible], it's just -- with the amount of stuff that you would actually have to deal with, like living on campus as a person of color, it's just kind of -- I would just -- I would recommend that you could probably find yourself a better place to live off of campus and it wouldn't be so much of a burden because you're not going to be here 24 hours a day. You actually have those times to get away because you're already away, you're out in the community with other people of color because there are actually a lot of people of color in this community.

...The beginning of this year, I had a problem with trying to get along with the other people as roommates, me trying to get used to them and trying to put myself out there so that they wouldn't put themselves out there and I'm trying to get to know them, and it's just like sometimes, it's just hard because they don't -- they're not trying to get to know you or anything. They just lock themselves in their own room and it's like where's the community at? I asked that. And that's one of the reasons why I would leave, too.

Another issues the lack of part-time offerings. We do have several part-time offerings, most of them are evening and weekend and for some people, it works out better for them if they can take daytime classes. I've encountered a lot of issues with that. Also, it's difficult because the majority of offerings are fulltime programs and sometimes you want to gain some hard skills, such as you might want to learn GIS mapping, you might need to take prerequisites for the program, such as a precalculus, science prerequisites, and it's very, very difficult to combine part-time offerings with fulltime offerings. I've done it several times before and generally fell flat on my face. That is just something which I really think Evergreen should offer way more support for, and especially because I originally intended to do the sciences and then I ended up focusing mostly on social justice issues and then I lacked a lot of prerequisites to enter into the sciences here, and so it was frustrating because it was so hard for me to -- I felt like I was kind of past the point where I could do that after sophomore year.

But I also think that when you enter an institution, especially if you're going to the Mods or wherever, that the people that greet you should be representative of you. If there's a Native and an Asian, and a Black coming in, then there needs to be a Native and Asian and Black RA, even if they don't work in the building, to say, "Listen, I work on the seventh floor. You're welcome to come talk to me." You know what I'm saying? Or someone to guide them to the community that they're seeking.

Getting into classes is also kind of frustrating sometimes because there's one class that fits perfectly with what you need to do or what you want to do in life, and then you don't get in and they don't teach it for another three years and you're like, "Well, that's kind of why I came to Evergreen."

I don't think I've ever made a conscious thought about leaving Evergreen, but the transition was really difficult even though I wanted that transition from the traditional schooling, it was still -- I was still relying on grades and that kind of feedback and when it wasn't present it was really difficult to navigate how I was doing in the class and -- it was beneficial, but also really challenging, I felt like I did it alone. And I'm not sure because I'm a transfer junior like if freshmen have a different orientation to the class and the way Evergreen works. So, I just felt like I didn't have that and that was really difficult.

I guess recommendations to the institution would definitely be to work with housing a lot more. I don't think there's enough connection between on the upper campus services for students of color and housing. And every freshman is required that lives farther away than, I don't know, 30 miles or something like that, is required to live on campus and to space -- and get this crazy expensive meal plan and spend all this time on campus, and they don't have a lot of connection towards stuff that's on upper campus like First Peoples services, TRiO...

I struggle with keeping a sense of my own identity in a way because it's like I'm not -- I don't know, I kind of feel like I've seen a lot of people come here and they're kind of like forced into not being themselves, if that makes sense? And so, it's like I understand being challenging and trying to get you to change your -- get a new perspective in a positive way, but then it's kind of like when it gets to the point where you feel like it's forced upon you or else, you're kind of like even pushed out. So, I've seen a couple of the students leave because of that. You feel like it's become too much, you can't take just being the minority out of the [group].

I think from other students of color that I've talked to as well, seminar has been a really important place in the sort of planting those seeds of wanting to not be at Evergreen, and particularly because -- I think -- and also my frustration comes in, kind of this neoliberal, multicultural place that's like, "We love everybody. Not really..." And it's just really hard to navigate because -- especially in student government and things, I interact with a lot of students that pride themselves on their anti-oppression sort of work and framework, and then they use that as -- it's not a conversation. They're just kind of like, "Yeah, you know, I got it." And if I say something wrong, like it's not wrong, basically. And so, I feel like once they have sort of done their dues, sort of, of anti-oppression training, then they're like, "Yeah, so then all people of color are now just people and I don't have to see their color because I know the history," and so this sort of positionality goes out the window and it gets really frustrating sometimes. I think that comes up in seminar.

I think if I had left the program and felt like I was in same boat, I would have been like, "So, all the things I came to Evergreen for," like the interdisciplinary, relationships with your professors, evaluations, that didn't turn out how I expected. I never really thought of leaving, but in a whole, I think some people come here with expectations of what Evergreen is about and when those aren't met, they just kind of like, "Well, then I'm just going to leave," and they're confused about how they had this school marketed in a certain way and they felt like it was a lie.

I think one thing that would be -- the things I love about Evergreen are also the things that make Evergreen -- like there's things I don't like about it in a sense, because we don't have prerequisites to be in a program and not everyone started from the same place, you didn't all take -- like for me, I didn't take a psych class, but I'm in the clinical psych program. Some people have years of experience, I didn't really have any. And so, you all start from a different place and at another school, you would have to be like you're going to take these three classes before you're in this class to prepare you. And so, if the teachers could say, "We realize you're all different stages and we're going to help you through that process, you have different writing and math and science, linguistic capabilities, all of that," I think that would be really helpful to have someone guide you starting from where you are. And some professors do that and some don't.

I think regarding the ILCs, it needs to have more of an accessible way to show that people can do ILCs and explaining what that means and explaining what people in the past have done because there's this whole -- historical records that the college has that talks about what people can get involved in the community with. They're not saying enough to students of color that they can get involved with enriching their own cultural identity and get credit for that. That's amazing that you can do -- you can be part of organizations that are doing that, and then also get credit for that. I just don't think that there is enough accessibility with learning contracts, it's almost you have to seek out the faculty to get sponsors and you have to really work hard to try to get information about it. So, more accessibility with that would be better.

I think some reasons why I've contemplated leaving, most the time I feel really confused about what I'm doing and I'm a junior -- well, I'm technically a senior now and I still feel really confused about what I'm doing. More like I know what I want to study, but I don't feel like I have enough academic guidance from someone who may have more experience to know what classes I should be taking or what -- I feel like that would be really helpful for me and I feel like I'm constantly, "Maybe I should take biology. Well, no, maybe I should take this or maybe I should take that," but then, there's only like one program I can take or there's not that many varied options that I can actually take a class, maybe a class isn't even offered during that quarter that I would really need to take.

I think students of color leave Evergreen with a sense of betrayal, almost. A lot of people have talked in here about how important family is to them, and I feel like for people of color and students of color especially, there's this need especially because our cultures are more statistically impoverished or not getting degrees in higher education, there's this need for us to go to college and get that degree and get a job and help our family and all of that kind of stuff. In coming to Evergreen, which is not sort of -- it's not a traditional school, it's this really weird model that's not necessarily going to be accepted when you graduate from Evergreen, you are taking a risk and you take this risk because of this promise of a more progressive student body and faculty where you'll be accepted more and you have this intellectual conversation kind of horizontally with students and faculty, and that's not what you get. And you get here and you're in class and you're facing all of these problems that everyone's been talking about. If you're not going to be enjoying your time in that way and you're also missing out potentially success in the future because you're choosing to go to Evergreen, you're losing more than you are gaining, and I think that's why a lot of students decide to leave.

I think that one of the biggest frustrations for me coming to this school was the lack of training from faculty. I think that as a necessary part of becoming faculty at Evergreen, they should have cultural diversity training, they should be trained about identity development, different stages people are at. They should be trained how to address race in a classroom and privilege in a classroom and how much space and agency people are taking up. Because it just makes me mad that people consistently take up more space than others in the classroom and they don't even realize it because that's what they've been doing their whole life, but the faculty have no idea how to address it, or maybe they don't even know that that's a problem and they just think that, "Oh, why are the people of color so quiet?" Well, maybe it's because they feel marginalized in the classroom.

I think that there needs to be more bonding between students and faculty of color to go with sort of the idea of ILCs so that you actually know which professors are good and which -- for your future programs you should get into. And I agree with the idea of actively hiring more faculty of color just because -- I mean, I've had a lot of white male professors who get oppression academically, but they're never going to get it in the real experience and I feel like that's a really valuable insight that a professor can give to their students.

I think this year, it really has [made a] lot of difference because of being part of First Peoples and communities like that, but freshman year, it just didn't seem like I had enough people reaching out to me to support freshmen. So, I think that's definitely something that could be improved.

I think while certain student groups are really supportive and I'm glad that they do a lot of work that they do, it sparks these conversations sometimes with people that I know that just are so disheartening and then there's no avenue afterwards to have a mediated conversation about these things. I think something that -- if anything, what has made me feel like leaving is the repetitive micro aggressions that at that point aren't micro aggressions, it's like repetitive and constantly in these spaces where I should feel safe. I've talked to other students of color about this notion of when like going into seminar and you say, "Oh, this is going to be a safe space," and that is really controversial because it's like a safe space for whom? And so, I think that's an important part for faculty to qualify because it should not be safe for everybody. You have to be very clear about who it's going to be safe for. And yeah, I think that that piece about people who pride themselves on anti-oppression work, who are actually oppressive, which is a lot of people here, that's probably one of the more disheartening things.

I would echo some of the things with the CRC -- personal wellness is really important to me and it really helps ground me and be able to stay in school, and the CRC is completely not a welcoming space for students of color, the outdoor programs, not a welcome space for anybody who is not a tall white man. And it's really difficult to find extracurricular things to do that are welcoming to students of color that are accessible and not ridiculously expensive, too

I've been forced to be the token Indian in class, like -- not so much by professors, sometimes they have good intentions, as people have said, but it still ends up in this really like, "Oh, God. Here it comes. Let's as [name], the Native American, how he feels and how his people feel about these..." But it happens more from students, I don't want to say fortunately, but it does happen from students more than it does from faculty.

I've kind of contemplated leaving Evergreen a few times and I feel like the main themed reason of why that is because sometimes, Evergreen feels like sort of a haven for middle class white kids to find themselves [laughter] and sometimes it manifests itself in Evergreen being kind of this fake school where you can kind of dick around and take as many classes in different areas as you want. So on one level, I'm a college freshmen -- not now, but like last year -- applying for scholarships and I go for help and say, "I haven't finished this program yet and I need a GPA for this, what do I do?" and I'm told by academic advisors, "Oh, you could just put 4.0 or just lie about it." I'm like, "That seems a little like not okay."

In terms of what people have said about not knowing what they are going to -- like not knowing what they're going to take the next couple years, I know that Evergreen really tries to put on their website what they're going to have for the next two years, maybe adding a third year so that people can really kind of pick for the next three years and beyond if they're going to stay longer? As well as the credit breakdown, I think it's really a disservice that people, although they join a program, they don't know what the credit breakdown is so you can't really tell if you're going to get your prereqs for like a certain degree or for a master's program. To help people really realize what they're getting into before they join a program would be helpful.

It's great that folks can get involved, but how the hell is anybody going to go up against a faculty member? It would be nice if there was some training for allies, for folks like me who don't fit the mold necessarily, the black-white setup really eliminates people -- the well-intended people that are trying to find a way but can't because they're not on your side or that they're forced to be on another side, so it'd be nice if there was an anti-oppressive, how to

become an ally course that says, "Hey, yeah. It sucks that you are the face of privilege, so how do you get beyond that hurt?" Because it's a really hurtful experience to find out you're a victimizer and that you want to be friends and can't be. And I think that if that were done -- kind of like -- Beverly Daniel Tatum has this book *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* And it is such a phenomenal book. People are reading Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and that reads significantly different to white kids, and it's one of the reasons why our program was shut down, because I stood up and I said, "Paulo Freire is great. But what you guys are reading and what people of color are reading is completely different."

It's mostly with classes, I feel like sometimes there's a lack of classes in what I'm interested in even though when I signed up, it looks like there are like -- for example, I wanted to do conservation work and they're like, "Oh, yeah. We have conservation classes and blah, blah, blah." But I've only seen two classes that do that in the time I've been here, and two of them are like study abroad it's like well, it costs me like six times as much to do study abroad

It's really because of the power differential, it's on the faculty, and it should only be on the faculty at the end of the day and to be like, "No," because who else is going to advocate? I can try and advocate because I'm older and I've been here longer and I kind of know that, yeah, if I lose funding, I'll figure out a way to come back maybe, or maybe not. I kind of -- I've seen the other side of it. I can survive. But for folks who are coming here as freshmen who are 17, 18, 19, to have white faculty members not protecting them is active institutional oppression. Out of that class, after that first quarter, there were two people of obvious color that maintained, and it was a significant number of people of color in that class that I hadn't seen and experienced. And those two that maintained and stayed where ballsy.

My recommendations would be to have some kind of summer prep program for students who - - obviously, it would be a personal choice whether you decide to go to it, because I'm going to echo what other folks said about there not being course requirements here, so people are coming from -- I just think everyone should have a Writing 101. I just think that there's -- it's so required and necessary for so many different programs, and also, to write in this academic way that some of us don't have that language to be able to navigate that. It translates a lot to so many different programs and the kind of academic success that you're going to have.

Scholars a Week was awesome, but I think it would be great to have some kind of -- students have the option to be able to take summer programs. I think that financial aid for the summer needs to be really figured out. There's a lot of programs like the organic farm, the sustainable farming program, you do not see students of color in that program. Why? Because you do not get financial aid for the summer really, other than loans. So most of the students that are in there are privileged.

Also, it bleeds out into the social realm as well, but Evergreen is so -- the political drama here is really, really big. If you happen to disagree with somebody's opinion, people often times won't listen to you, even if you have a critical point to make about it, you're just kind of labeled as -- you're scapegoated as a bad person if you disagree with something, even if you have reasons that you'd like to explain for disagreeing with it, or even if it's because you think that that person -- they do not have life experience along those lines and they're speaking more from a book and that became a big issue for me because I did get offended at a lot of things people said because they seemed to not understand issues.

The faculty have no, no idea how to manage things. Last year, I was in Elections Education and Empowerment with three super white faculty members, all really well-intended people, and had gone through some training, but still, missed the boat entirely. We actually had students of color, not student of color, in the class and in seminars that first quarter we were talking

about statistics and the elections, but we couldn't talk about Obama's race. There's people here that are not middle class, they're like over -- like they have a lot of money and they're here, and they can shut down conversations so fast. It's because they have a class distinction in the way that they talk and in the way that they have agency with the faculty. Like they're not afraid to talk to the faculty, they're not afraid of losing credits because their financial aid and their ticket to be here is -- it's not in question. So, they don't have to sit on their hands and kind of go, "Okay, am I going to point out fucked up this is?"

The first thing that I realized after my first year was that in a way, Evergreen is really bureaucratic in the way you sign up for classes and the way you get internships and stuff. I wanted to do an internship my second year and it was really hard because I had only had one teacher and they weren't teaching -- they were teaching like science and I wanted to do a nonprofit sector internship and they weren't going to sponsor me because it wasn't science, so it was really hard to find a sponsor, didn't end up finding a sponsor and I got really annoyed at that, even though I had gotten all my credits and everything, so it was -- I was in good standing and everything.

The other thing is that when I was in community college, there was nothing about Evergreen. Every college -- at Green River, every college was represented there, but Evergreen wasn't and it was just on a fluke that I had this advisor that worked here that knew that Evergreen would be a fit. So, that might be something that they want to examine, is having an office at the community college with a representative of Evergreen in it to walk people through them and that would more facilitate having people that need to hook up with TRiO and First Peoples and learn about the inclusion and exclusion of Evergreen more adapted to the area. Because after I came here to the -- well, first I met Felix and then I came here through the academic fair and met Peter, and so when I got back to school, I said, "I'm going to go to their office and find out more about Evergreen." No, I could research UW, Central Washington, every other college in the state, but there was no office for Evergreen. So, that might be something that would be helpful.

There's been a couple major things. One, being the only person of color in class a lot of time, a lot of times. I took a political economy racial, on race class and gender, and race would come up and I'd be the token in the class. I'd feel like I was speaking for my whole race rather than my individual experience in life, which was hard because a lot of white kids or whatever would come up to me like -- try to talk to me like they knew or something like that, or try to comfort me. And I'm like it's not a situation that you can comfort.

There's ways in which students -- Evergreen's held as this place of inquiry, which it is, I feel like there's really genuine inquiry here, but sometimes, I feel like people don't have the ability to view themselves or how to kind of step back and be like, "How am I applying this inquiry to people which I want something from them and they have this feeling of like, oh, I've been raised with this, therefore I know I can have it, so I'm going to approach you no matter what because I feel like I deserve this, I need to know this information because it's important to me to know." I'm like that doesn't roll well with students of color.

This quarter has been the hardest and I've been missing class and I've just been really burnt out because of my accumulation of stress over the years with how students of color are treated or viewed within a class of -- as the forum says, 25% of the school is students of color, but then, that's a lot of whiteness around to have an impact on how you're -- you live in your space. Not saying that -- I've actually had the fortune, it's been very fortunate that for most of the white faculty I've had, they've been really good at knowing how to work within situations of race and privilege. For example, Zoltan Grossman, one of the best allies of Native people I've ever met

in my life. He's like this new standard that you've got to get up there and you know he's had to work -- he's not perfect, but he knows how to work and be respectful within Native communities, and that is such a huge thing. And so, to have him within my first year was really reassuring for how -- like okay, I'm not screwed if I get a white faculty all the time. Though, there was a program I left within the first day because faculty had some weird woo-woo things about Indians and I was like, "I can't do this," so I [inaudible] get out right away because it was going to be some weird thing for Halloween, they're like come -- there's people in there who were appropriating Native culture and like visibly wore it just on the first day, like on them, like either on tattoos or just in the way they talked. And people would come up to me -- if they knew I was Native, then they would ask questions. If they didn't, they'd ask me, "What are you? Where are you from?"

This week I finished class, I have an environmental advocacy class, and one of my classmates, he says after the class, "You know what? As a future old white guy, we have absolutely no one else -- since we're talking about issue environmental justice, we have no representation from anyone else but other currently old white guys. And me being one, it feels kind of irritating because I have no perspective on what else is going. It's just the same kind of community, and there's no extra knowledge or extra perspective brought to the table."

We had one gal, she didn't care if she was there in class or not, sometimes she'd just show up. She went on this tirade about how she felt about race and being white and how it was racism is so over and not a problem. You could hear it, like that murmur when a crowd -- there used to be this thing on ships where people would start hissing a little or just kind of murmuring a little, and that was a sign that people were about ready to mutiny, and that was happening in the class. There was -- yeah. People were starting to do like almost the call and response sort of thing and she didn't realize what was going on and nobody stopped her. I kind of asked her like a clarifying point to see if what she was really what she was saying. And she just made it worse. She was just digging herself down further. The faculty just kind of did not stop it. They literally should have stood up and said, "You. Now out. We're talking. This is actually in breach of social contract across this campus. This class is about privilege, it's about statistics, it's about what is going on now. And you are so far off into outfield and you can't even recognize people around you are about ready to like come after you, but are holding back because they are actually classier than you."

When I was a freshman, I think that it was hard at times to get involved with things on campus, and I think that that's something that always needs to be a work in progress for students feeling like they can get involved with things because I think that attitude that I had toward clubs and with different community organizations was that they were already set, like they don't need to have any other outside help. I think that really showing people that they have an ability to make change, because when I was a freshman -- for two quarters, I was in kind of a bad situation in my roommate situation and I just didn't feel like they really got it. And he was making a bad environment for me in my room. So, that was, I think, one of the main reasons I wanted to leave was I didn't really think I could talk to anybody about it so much from the school -- I mean, eventually, I actually did go to housing and talk to a resident director about it and they did give me a new room. But yeah, I just didn't think that I was given enough support sometimes as a freshman. I think that especially in housing in the dorms, as person of color, I didn't feel like the RAs were reaching out to me enough, talking to me about that. I didn't really care about movie night, I'm trying to talk about race in the dorms and a lot of the freshmen coming into college, it was the first time they're talking about all these things that need to be get brought up, but I just didn't think they were brought up enough.

When you're in seminar and you are seminarizing with people from Boston and even Concrete, Washington, that haven't been exposed to African Americans or Natives or Mexicans, or just white privilege, they want to have a set of rules that oppress you because they're intimidated by what it is you're setting forth. And so, in those arenas, I've always had to -- so what? I spend \$21,000 to be here a year, and learning is challenging, it's painful, it's hurtful, and I want to be challenged and it is my duty to challenge you. So, I don't like the covenant thing where we're going to all stop you when we feel uncomfortable. Learning is uncomfortable, especially when you're learning outside of your arena and you're learning about things that have nothing to do with your life.

Sometimes there's a program that I really like a third of it's a fulltime program, but having to deal with all the extra stuff is kind of frustrating. And I know that's kind of Evergreen's core academic model, but it's -- for some people, I don't think that it really works out so much. And so, I think that we should offer more part-time programs because Evergreen has a lot of benefits besides its interdisciplinary classes. There are a lot of great reasons why somebody would want to stay attending Evergreen, but not all of them want to or can be fulltime students, and some of those people have been through traumatic events in their lives to where being a fulltime student is very strenuous for them or to where they might -- they've just been so stressed out and they've been in school for so long that they just need to spend some time not really accelerating that fast and deciding the next direction that they're going to go.

2. Faculty

- Faculty training/development, need for it
- Specific things faculty do and don't do that support or undermine students, including in seminar
- Faculty hiring

FACULTY: WHAT IS WORKING

I have a really close friend who talks often about how they were really interested in leaving a lot, and then they say the thing that saved them were ILCs. Because specifically the seminar space was so unsafe. They were part of Gateways and they found that even in Gateways, there were a lot of students that were not up to par with their anti-oppression work. And so, they just kind of said no to programs for a while and did ILCs and then they also recommend working with -- they said Chico was like the greatest person to work with, but working with faculty of color on ILCs.

I'd probably say one of my favorite things about Evergreen is how personable the faculty are, they're very approachable, and they are -- like kind of what you said, they are very dedicated to peoples success. So, they will take time out of their week outside of class to work with you. And I really appreciate that because at some schools it seems like you won't even get a hold of your faculty, they'll have a teacher assistant work with you, but you can't really get a hold of them unless it's their office hours or something, and even then it's kind of hard.

I'm still at Evergreen because I get to pursue my passion. My first professor towards the middle of winter quarter, we were talking about one of my papers and they had just said, "You are good at analyzing, you over-analyze a lot," and I was shocked because that's something that you have to get to know a person to know. And that means that they paid attention and they cared. Even through high school and through other experiences, professors, teachers, you don't often see them individually care about each of their students. I stayed at Evergreen because I think it's unique that I get to combine all of the things that I love and make them into one and focus on myself while I'm focusing on my education because they go hand-in-hand.

I've actually had the fortune, it's been very fortunate that for most of the white faculty I've had, they've been really good at knowing how to work within situations of race and privilege. For example, Zoltan Grossman, one of the best allies of Native people I've ever met in my life. He's like this new standard that you've got to get up there and you know he's had to work -- he's not perfect, but he knows how to work and be respectful within Native communities, and that is such a huge thing. And so, to have him within my first year was really reassuring for how -- like okay, I'm not screwed if I get a white faculty all the time.

It was weird because coming from a community college where you take like three classes and you're in these three classes and you go to these time and you barely have that much interaction with you teacher, and here at Evergreen, I'm talking with my teacher pretty much every day, having conversations with him and learning from them while they're learning for me. It's pretty amazing how that happens.

it's always someone available to see you through to get to -- well, the people that I lock into when I need it are always available. Always. For the positive encouragement, from professors, teachers, TRiO....

And then, I had a midpoint evaluation and my teacher was talking to me, he's like -- and at the end of the conversation he said, "You are a bright young person. You should bring this out during seminar." And then after that, I started participating a lot more and brought out myself and started taking advantage of my education here at Evergreen. That really helped me.

I am really, really counting on the relationships that I've built with faculty to help me get into graduate school, so those recommendation letters are going to be key for me.

The reason I'm still here at Evergreen is because I am gaining relationships with the faculties and people here on campus. I've got a sense of a strong community here and I like to take what I've learned here and take it back to my own community where I grew up in, Tacoma, and I got goals for the upcoming years with Gateway and working with my faculty.

I'd have to say it's all the staff in my graduate program. We have really good classmates as well, but the [faculty have] repeatedly, and repeatedly, repeatedly emphasized that we are here to help if you just ask us, and we'll do everything we can to try and help you stay in the program and get through it.

I'm enjoying the curriculum and building relationships with more teachers.

My faculty know my name, and that -- I have a personal relationship with them because of the way the 16 credit programs are structured, I am able to have a lot of time [with them].

My favorite thing is the accessibility of the people that are teaching you, how you can go to their office, you can set up appointments with them.

My teacher, Peter Bohmer, he had to reiterate, "She has a right to her opinion and these are historical things that did, in fact, occur. The mere fact that you don't like them does not make them any less valid."

[Alice Nelson] leads the best seminars on micro aggressions I have ever -- she's so great.

2. Faculty

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FACULTY: WHAT IS NOT WORKING & RECOMMENDATIONS

I think students of color leave Evergreen with a sense of betrayal, almost. A lot of people have talked in here about how important family is to them, and I feel like for people of color and students of color especially, there's this need especially because our cultures are more statistically impoverished or not getting degrees in higher education, there's this need for us to go to college and get that degree and get a job and help our family and all of that kind of stuff.

In coming to Evergreen, which is not sort of -- it's not a traditional school, it's this really weird model that's not necessarily going to be accepted when you graduate from Evergreen, you are taking a risk and you take this risk because of this promise of a more progressive student body and faculty where you'll be accepted more and you have this intellectual conversation kind of horizontally with students and faculty, and that's not what you get. And you get here and you're in class and you're facing all of these problems that everyone's been talking about. If you're not going to be enjoying your time in that way and you're also missing out potentially success in the future because you're choosing to go to Evergreen, you're losing more than you are gaining, and I think that's why a lot of students decide to leave.

We had one gal, she didn't care if she was there in class or not, sometimes she'd just show up. She went on this tirade about how she felt about race and being white and how it was racism is so over and not a problem. You could hear it, like that murmur when a crowd -- there used to be this thing on ships where people would start hissing a little or just kind of murmuring a little, and that was a sign that people were about ready to mutiny, and that was happening in the class. People were starting to do like almost the call and response sort of thing and she didn't realize what was going on and nobody stopped her. I kind of asked her like a clarifying point to see if what she was really what she was saying. And she just made it worse. She was just digging herself down further. The faculty just kind of did not stop it. They literally should have stood up and said, "You. Now out. We're talking. This is actually in breach of social contract across this campus. This class is about privilege, it's about statistics, it's about what is going on now. And you are so far off into outfield and you can't even recognize people around you are about ready to like come after you, but are holding back because they are actually classier than you."

There was a program I left within the first day because faculty had some weird woo-woo things about Indians and I was like, "I can't do this," so I [inaudible] get out right away because it was going to be some weird thing for Halloween, they're like come -- there's people in there who were appropriating Native culture and like visibly wore it just on the first day, like on them, like either on tattoos or just in the way they talked. And people would come up to me -- if they knew I was Native, then they would ask questions. If they didn't, they'd ask me, "What are you? Where are you from?"

The faculty have no, no idea how to manage things. Last year, I was in Elections Education and Empowerment with three super white faculty members, all really well-intended people, and had gone through some training, but still, missed the boat entirely. We actually had students of color, not student of color, in the class and in seminars that first quarter we were talking about statistics and the elections, but we couldn't talk about Obama's race. There's people here that are not middle class, they're like over -- like they have a lot of money and they're here, and they can shut down conversations so fast. It's because they have a class distinction in the way that they talk and in the way that they have agency with the faculty. Like they're not afraid to talk to the faculty, they're not afraid of losing credits because their financial aid and their ticket to be here is -- it's not in question. So, they don't have to sit on their hands and kind of go, "Okay, am I going to point out fucked up this is?"

So, my teacher's really hard on me at times, but it's like he doesn't understand that I'm a freshman. It's more like, "Well, you're a student and you should understand this," but he kind of like puts me at a level and scale of everybody else, and I'm just like why are you scaling me to all these other people? These other people haven't done the same thing that I've done. They're not experiencing it the way that I'm experiencing because this is a new subject and it's different, and I'm really like, "Hey, this is hard," but it's like he's putting me on a scale with all these other people and for me, it's really oppressive because I'm the only student of color in my class.

So for him to compare me to other people is just like you're comparing me to people that are like white and high upper class and have more material than I do. So, it's like basically just saying I'm stuck with him because I'm a person of color and I can't really learn this and I can't do that, and I directed that towards him and he got -- like he -- through the rest of the quarter, he was just like, "I'm not going to do that again. I never noticed you felt that way," and stuff like that.

[White male faculty member] would always say, "Why are you always quiet in the classroom?" and I think that was a huge degree of why, is because at that point in my identity development, I wasn't comfortable speaking out against how uncomfortable I felt and how much people were making generalizations and stereotypes about people. So, I think that's a really big thing to me that is a huge flaw.

One guy, he would just tear into -- we had two instructors in winter, and one of them, a white woman, she's well-intended, but I think that just taking her into a low income housing project and then having do like a [potluck] or something would be really good for her because she doesn't quite get it. You don't talk back to a Black man -- there's this -- like she was fair skinned, blue eyed, blonde, smaller and there's sexism, right? So, there is -- [inaudible] there's no hierarchy, but there kind of is. If you're in a position of authority, if you're a white woman and you're shutting down a Black male student who has the audacity to talk about these things, you're in the wrong. And she was doing that. And he's so ballsy, he's so cool. He just keeps going. He doesn't give up and I mean, I'm hardheaded and persistent, but he is that to the nth degree.

My first year I also almost decided to transfer out or to just not come back and no transfer. My first quarter, I took an introductory science class and I just felt so lost where I felt like the expectations were -- the expectations of the professors were mostly expecting that you already knew statistics or you in high school already had an introductory class to a lot of science classes that I didn't have access to. I didn't go past chemistry, mostly because it wasn't offered. And so, I felt like I was falling behind to the point -- but no one really understanding that it was -- I felt like I was being told that I wasn't smart, but I was like, "You're not looking at the social conditions of my schools and a lot of schools of communities of color and low income communities, they don't have resources and they don't have these classes." So, it's like to expect someone to just jump from biology or chemistry and expect them to understand a more in-depth science topic is a really big jump for a lot of people, and I just didn't feel supported. I had tutoring and I still, even with tutoring, I didn't feel -- I would go to class and still be really confused because the class kept speeding along and I was trying to catch up.

My first year at Evergreen I almost left. I just didn't feel supported, but I also didn't seek support. I didn't feel support and I didn't seek support, and I didn't feel -- I was learning about different cultures and I was learning about race and I was learning about class disparities and classism, but within my classes, I was like the only Black person and I just didn't feel heard, I didn't feel listened to. So, I felt like my experiences didn't really matter. So in that sense, I didn't feel supported. And I looked into going to schools back home in Ohio because I just wanted to go to the place where people understood where I was coming from.

Like with a lot of people, it's really easy to build relationships with faculty and people in your class, but for me, I'm used to my work explaining itself. I'm not used to having to like my teachers, talk to my teachers after class, feel like they know me and I know them. I'm used to going to class, doing what I'm supposed to do, turning in my work, having the feedback, and having that show. But I feel like because I'm not comfortable enough putting myself out there to my faculty, that reflects in my evaluation. But for me, that's really shady because that's not who I am. Still, on paper, it's not reflecting who I am as a person.

It's really because of the power differential, it's on the faculty, and it should only be on the faculty at the end of the day and to be like, "No," because who else is going to advocate? I can try and advocate because I'm older and I've been here longer and I kind of know that, yeah, if I lose funding, I'll figure out a way to come back maybe, or maybe not. I kind of -- I've seen the other side of it. I can survive. But for folks who are coming here as freshmen who are 17, 18, 19, to have white faculty members not protecting them is active institutional oppression. Out of that class, after that first quarter, there were two people of obvious color that maintained, and it was a significant number of people of color in that class that I hadn't seen and experienced. And those two that maintained and stayed where ballsy.

It's like they don't notice when they try to raise the bar or try to put you at that level, they don't understand you are the only -- or you are the few that are like students of color and you don't understand something and then when they try to put you at that level, you're just like, "Hey, hold on. You realize I'm the only -- there's like me and there's that other guy that's like Black or Asian or something like that, and he's struggling with it, too?"

It's great that folks can get involved, but how the hell is anybody going to go up against a faculty member? It would be nice if there was some training for allies, for folks like me who don't fit the mold necessarily, the black-white setup really eliminates people -- the well-intended people that are trying to find a way but can't because they're not on your side or that they're forced to be on another side, so it'd be nice if there was an anti-oppressive, how to become an ally course that says, "Hey, yeah. It sucks that you are the face of privilege, so how do you get beyond that hurt?" Because it's a really hurtful experience to find out you're a victimizer and that you want to be friends and can't be. And I think that if that were done -- kind of like -- Beverly Daniel Tatum has this book *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* And it is such a phenomenal book. People are reading Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and that reads significantly different to white kids, and it's one of the reasons why our program was shut down, because I stood up and I said, "Paulo Freire is great. But what you guys are reading and what people of color are reading is completely different."

If you have trouble with faculty, you're stuck with them for three, four months, and your financial aid is riding on it. So, you don't have a choice to opt out or to take that time out, take a week and go to the coast or whatever and surf. Some kids do that because they have the money and they have the freedom to do that.

I've been forced to be the token Indian in class, like -- not so much by professors, sometimes they have good intentions, as people have said, but it still ends up in this really like, "Oh, God. Here it comes. Let's as [name], the Native American, how he feels and how his people feel about these..." But it happens more from students, I don't want to say fortunately, but it does happen from students more than it does from faculty.

I would echo the subtle racism and discrimination at the school...I've had a lot of workshops and trainings at the Student of color Conference and being involved in First Peoples and so, I feel like a lot more prepared than when I first came to school to be able to navigate that. But it would be amazing if a white faculty could just step in and say, "Hey, that's not okay." Or just address it....I haven't seen -- with the exception -- I had a program with Chico Herbison and I feel like -- and that was my first year, and so, that was two quarters and it was a ridiculously diverse -- and it's not ridiculous -- it was amazingly diverse class. I feel like it was the complete opposite of what my experience was like when I left that program in the spring, and then that spring quarter, I felt like my heart fell and I felt like I lost all of the positive energy and support that I had. I went from a class of like 18 students of color to a class of 3, and I thought, "I don't know if I'm going to come back" that year. It was incredibly difficult.

I think while certain student groups are really supportive and I'm glad that they do a lot of work that they do, it sparks these conversations sometimes with people that I know that just are so disheartening and then there's no avenue afterwards to have a mediated conversation about these things. I think something that -- if anything, what has made me feel like leaving is the repetitive micro aggressions that at that point aren't micro aggressions, it's like repetitive and constantly in these spaces where I should feel safe. I've talked to other students of color about this notion of when like going into seminar and you say, "Oh, this is going to be a safe space," and that is really controversial because it's like a safe space for whom? And so, I think that's an important part for faculty to qualify because it should not be safe for everybody. You have to be very clear about who it's going to be safe for. And yeah, I think that that piece about people who pride themselves on anti-oppression work, who are actually oppressive, which is a lot of people here, that's probably one of the more disheartening things.

I think that this damn school needs to hire more faculty of color. I was part of a DTF that was supposed to hire a person for history and because of the budget, it got froze. I don't think that's not the only reasons because B.S., it wasn't just the budget, there's some other problems going on that I can't go into. But there needs to be more faculty of color hired. Not just faculty of color, but look at where are the programs -- I feel like Native Studies is doing not too shabby. They've got quite a bit of Native faculty. We need other folks, too, that can have people when they come to campus say, "I see myself in this institution."

I think that there needs to be more bonding between students and faculty of color to go with sort of the idea of ILCs so that you actually know which professors are good and which -- for your future programs you should get into. And I agree with the idea of actively hiring more faculty of color just because -- I mean, I've had a lot of white male professors who get oppression academically, but they're never going to get it in the real experience and I feel like that's a really valuable insight that a professor can give to their students.

I think that one of the biggest frustrations for me coming to this school was the lack of training from faculty. I think that as a necessary part of becoming faculty at Evergreen, they should have cultural diversity training, they should be trained about identity development, different stages people are at. They should be trained how to address race in a classroom and privilege in a classroom and how much space and agency people are taking up. Because it just makes me mad that people consistently take up more space than others in the classroom and they don't even realize it because that's what they've been doing their whole life, but the faculty have no idea how to address it, or maybe they don't even know that that's a problem and they just think that, "Oh, why are the people of color so quiet?" Well, maybe it's because they feel marginalized in the classroom.

I think all faculty and staff in Evergreen should have to take a mandatory anti-oppressive workshop at least twice a year and stages of identity workshop. I also think that would help if programs passed surveys around. When you have three quarters of just in those beginning and after, just to feel -- or maybe beginning, middle, after to feel how their students are doing. A lot of the times students feel like they can't speak about these issues that they have, I mean like to the faculty and they say it to someone else. And it's like, okay, well, I'm really sorry that you feel that way. Maybe to have these surveys would help faculty better see how students are doing or how they're feeling about the way discussions are going and go from there.

I think a lack of cultural competency is a reason students may choose to leave. Well, not choose, but are forced to leave, I should say. That's a big common thing I've found with certain Native students who are struggling right now or are about to get kicked out based on the credit and ability to keep up on the program, or just community stresses. I know one student has so much going on at home with family on the Res and it's just really consuming. It's like they're straining to maintain themselves here, and so that starts affecting their academic work, their social life and things like that that keep them going on campus. And then when they go to talk to faculty about it, there's like not always such a firm understanding. That actually happened to me the other day. I'm not going to leave, but I just see that as an example of, okay, this is happening with that student.

I have had faculty that are very careful, but it's still I find that every conversation about race and privilege we have at Evergreen is like an intro class so it doesn't get anywhere because I feel like people kind of do it and they're like, "Got it." And it's kind of frustrating.

I contemplated leaving because of ignorance in seminar and in classes, in the classes I was in. I got tired of listening to people talk like they had experience it and they knew what their -- and that they were like the professor and they were trying to teach us, but not listen at the same time. So, the days that got hard in seminar and the days that I felt like I was alone was when I contemplated leaving.

I also have had the experience where the faculty are not supportive of students of color. I feel like just my personality is like if you're not giving me what I want, I'm going to bother you until you get -- because that's your job. But for somebody that doesn't have that inclination, which is totally understandable, I don't think that the faculty take into consideration positionality because they're like, "We're all in a place of higher learning, so we're all the same."

[In] seminar...the class can be divided really quickly to have groups for or against you, and you have to be very accommodating in who you are and what you are to sit through it. And so, I just think that that is -- if they're on the lookout for inclusion, that's something that should not be happening in any college arena, let alone right here where the most liberal on the globe.

Definitely seminars in talking a lot about difficult conversations, and not feeling like faculty were able to do anything -- well, not that they weren't able to, that they weren't doing anything or like stepping in and saying, "What you're saying could be offensive to someone here." Or even at times saying, "We're not going to get personal when talking about race," and I'm obviously the only Black person in the room. It's things like that where I think I just left classes just feeling like what is the point if we're going to be presented with these conversations and then nothing actually gets resolved? So, that was really difficult.

At the student level, being used as a person of color to -- in every class you take where there is that one Race 101 week to have to sit in seminar and tell students why you're being an asshole. It's tiring, and as a student of color, you shouldn't have to be the teacher every single quarter. So, that's always a sign.

Being able to have someone come into programs where it's like break things down for a lot of students that wouldn't normally go to anti-oppression trainings or wouldn't go into those conversations, making sure that they hear that because I feel like that's where we need it. Like for a Day of Absence, for example, like all the students of color in my class were there that day, were in class that day because it was not -- Day of Absence was mentioned, this announcement, but it wasn't given the -- it wasn't like a thing that was encouraged, yeah, that's the word, encouraged for students to go to. And if you miss a day, then you miss -- you still had the same -- you can't really miss a day because it's a lot of materials that they go over.

I've felt this in seminar, too, because a lot of times when I'm speaking, I'll be interrupted by somebody and I won't get to speak then on out. And it's usually somebody that's white privilege, I'm sorry to say, but it's true. And usually if I tried to stop them, they'd stop me immediately and I'll be like, "That's rude. Why are you stopping me? Why can't I go on with what I want to say when this person can interrupt me to go on with what they were going to say?" But I've noticed that a lot. At first, it was kind of like, "Oh, it happens. Everybody interrupted everybody." But it kept reoccurring and I had addressed that, but my professor is like, "I don't see it," and then I asked other people and they didn't see it, either, so I was having to feel like trapped in, so I couldn't really get the answer to my question, like why is this happening? And they were like, "We don't see it."

The thing about the professors is I've noticed that not only the professor that you're talking about, but several professors have problems with men of color. There was one guy that I was in class with, he was doing fine, we were in seminar, we had two separate professors and he wrote a paper for that professor and that professor gave him like a 40 when he had been getting 90s and 85s. And so, because I was a class assistant, he came and asked me how could he transfer seminars? And the professor came out and told me I should stay in my place, and I said, "Well, where is that? Where is that at? Because I need to get in it."

I've been here for about two and a half years and only experienced two black instructors. So, that's been really hard because I've seen friends of mine going through the woes, all types of struggles, maybe family struggles or just not being able to relate to some of the stuff that was being taught, and the instructor would be a white male, and my friends would be African Americans and you'd be like, "Man, you just don't know," and sometimes I don't want to write about this. You're bringing up stuff that people like us like to maybe not forget, but not it be brought up over and over and over and over, and us be the only ones in the room to talk about it and to talk about it with. And there not be places of real comfort for us to go to and speak with somebody, being the lack of African American instructors, or people to comfort us, or that been there, that could say I know what you mean.

I thought about contemplating and leaving because I didn't really like how Evergreen programs are set up. I was just going to class every day and just sitting there, and I didn't really understand why some classes were set up that way and I would sit in class, we have seminar, I'm just sitting there like, "Oh, my God."

I think it would be good if the students were surveyed, right? Because the faculty might be like, "Of course we're covering that," but then students might have a different opinion about was that done in a way that made sense to them?

3. Connection to Campus

- Academic and Support Services: First Peoples, TRiO, KEY, QuASR, Writing Center
- Student Activities
- Informal student activities, gathering places

CONNECTION TO CAMPUS: WHAT IS WORKING

I do second [name's] advice on seeking out support. That definitely was a lifesaver several times that I had established relationships with people in academic advising, First Peoples, and also that I was able to access resources and support through TRiO. You never know who you know knows, basically. At Evergreen, it's really, really helpful that the campus is so closely connected, and if you advocate for yourself, there is a lot that can get done.

When I was just getting used to the area and the people, and then after meeting with my APIC and First Peoples, then I found people that I connected with and they connected me to other people. So, just finding connections throughout the year has kept me grounded here.

What I like about Evergreen or why I'm still here is because I'm finding a community, but the only time that I can think of that I thought of leaving when was I didn't find that community.

This is...the end of my first year and I plan on staying because I am building a community here.

I like how open the campus is. We have so many resources available to us as students that in many other colleges you, say, might not be able to check out many types of media equipment unless you're in some sort of media program or another program that would require it.

There's a lot of things that I have that are a favorite at Evergreen. One is First Peoples Lounge. I walk through the area every time I'm on campus, the people in there are real welcoming. TRiO office people are hella cool. The Flaming Eggplant upstairs, like it's live with all the organic food and just [the vibe] up in there.

The second quarter, I joined MEChA and that's actually the reason why I stayed at Evergreen because I just found not only support from TRiO and First Peoples my first quarter, but then I found support from my fellow classmates who were also taking -- some of them were taking science classes, but we were also talking about social issues in our community and having that balance and it made me feel supported in all aspects.

The same thing with TRiO, if you've got a problem, they're scrambling to make it happen, to -- like if it's a book or you need a computer, or you just need advice or you need to decompress, there's somebody right there to say, "This is what's happening in traditional setting, you don't have that, you just need to press on."

The reason I'm still here at Evergreen is because I am gaining relationships with the faculties and people here on campus. I've got a sense of a strong community here and I like to take what I've learned here and take it back to my own community where I grew up in, Tacoma, and I got goals for the upcoming years with Gateway and working with my faculties.

I feel like -- right now, the only things that come to mind is when you start Evergreen to really seek out support services, whatever services that you may need, but also seek out a group or any kind of group, if you're into sports, you're into -- like all these student groups that are offered, join something that you're also really passionate about outside of class because that's something that I feel like -- that's where a lot of the support comes from, is after class hours is from the people that you engage with afterwards.

I feel like I'm definitely staying because even if there are issues or problems or areas that I think could use improvement or advancement, I always find a type of community that's mixed with staff, faculty, and students that what to hear that opinion and can talk about it and ways to solve it, for myself and the community, if that's a bigger need.

I think that also just the groups that I've -- the people I've met here have all been really great, and a lot of them are community organizers that will house things outside of campus that maintain that sort of feeling of solidarity.

So, it depends on where they're at. I'm like, "Maybe you have been in an all-Black space before." It depends on where that person is in their identity. But also, if they're a really active person, I would strongly encourage them to get involved in student government because it's very important to at least have your presence there because when other groups of color do -- like on the SNA Board, when other groups of color do approach, it's nice to have another person of color in the room to know -- it's much easier to have that presence. And having people on the GSU that are brown is really nice, just to kind of check it a bit and make your presence known.

I definitely want to say, of course, TRiO -- because of TRiO, I really feel like I turned my path of fall quarter to being like that kid that sat in his room and be like...there's not really people of color to hang out with to like that kid that's being proactive for himself. So, it's like necessarily, they don't have to go to TRiO, it's just like reminding them why they're really here. They're really here to get an education, and as dull as that sounds, that's the truth. You came here to get an education. As much, yeah, having the social construct of hanging out with other people, but if hanging out with other people of color isn't necessarily your thing, just remind them that they're here to get their education and get what they want to do.

One of the things that helped me is having a good support system in Felix and other people from TRiO and having good faculty that have supported me in my education here at Evergreen. That's one of the big things that probably could have helped.

nd I love student activities. And I love the ways -- like I feel that I have a lot of agency as a student to get involved in institution-wide conversations, or really large conversations, and I think that's really special. I think the size also contributes to that a lot. Like you were saying, I feel like I can -- if I need support I can ask people, and even if I ask a faculty a question that technically wouldn't go to a faculty, there might be -- like a more academic advising question, they're going to help me or they're going to refer me to someone else, or give me a book, or -- and I think that's really awesome.

My favorite thing about Evergreen is the environment, like it's small community, so in classes, I get to know the people that I'm in class with and I'll know the teachers better.

My advice would be to go to the QUASAR, to go to the Writing Center, to seek out and ask who are the faculty who are -- I don't want to say allies, [inaudible] that word -- but are in solidarity with students of color and if you really want to be in a program with someone who maybe you know has -- other students of color have had problems with and to seek out a buddy maybe to be in that program with you or to drop into First Peoples if you need to decompress after a really rough seminar.

It wasn't until my senior year that I choose -- Evergreen was one of my choices. It was either that or a community college, and it wasn't until Felix and other TriO advisors came to me and spoke to me. It was like, "Evergreen is really a choice that you can make and it can happen." After seeing how low tuition was, then having Felix there to help me out and other people that I knew, I was like, "Yeah, this is the place for me."

If it weren't for First Peoples my experience at Evergreen would be completely different. But I went to the Scholars program and that was super important to getting me a head start of how Evergreen was going to function. So, I think doing that with other students of color was a really good bonding experience, it kind of connected us. So, I remained in contact with most of the people from that program, and that's really been a foundation of like people you know and kind of network out from there, I can say.

I've also built a really strong community on campus, friends, and people who I also consider family as well. So, those have been big motivators.

I would recommend that if they were going to come be a freshman, sign up for the First Peoples Scholars program because it gives you a great opportunity to prepare yourself for the work that you're going to get involved in, but it also builds that community that you will be able to rely on and be able to know. You'll have a head start, "I know these people on campus. I see them. I'll be supported. I'll be able to maintain myself and ourselves as a community," so really, find yourself within others.

I would really encourage them to seek out the Unity Lounge because that's a really amazing place and filled with amazing people. It's a space that I feel like a lot of people feel like it's a safe space.

I was a part of the TRiO program in high school and I came out and visit the campus, and I fell in love with it, just the whole landscape and everything.

I transferred from Tacoma Community College and I was part of MEChA CASA there. So, I got pretty much put on with TRiO as soon as I came and they all helped me out tremendously. Just being able to have that extra little help, you know what I mean? And also, I'm like first generation for my family to be graduating, I graduate this quarter. So, that kind of pushed me a little bit more, like lit a fire under me to be able to accomplish it and having to support from a bunch of staff and friends has been a big reason why I'm still here.

I think one of the best things that we can do for other students of color is just shower them in community and support. First Peoples does that, different student organizations does that. When people are having a really hard time, [inaudible] who's in the Native Student Alliance, he's doing super bad this quarter, and so I've been walking to his apartment -- or not apartment, dorm, he lives on campus and so, [inaudible], "Hey, we're doing this," I'll call him up and be like, "Hey, we're going to go meet, do this stuff together. Please come. Do know that we care about you and that we want you to be well and do well. If that means that you want to go downtown and get some food or -- at least get you out of your dorm, get out of there, it's suffocating."

I think initially, like if you're here one quarter and you don't find your community, to give it some time -- I mean, at any school, that's how it would be. You don't always find your best friend the first day, even though I did. So, I was just really lucky. I think realizing that no matter where you are, you're going to be at a place where you're new at some point in your life and I feel like after a certain period of time, usually two years, you can realize, "This really isn't for me," but also giving yourself that time to be you and to get to know people, and then after a while, you can make sure that, "Yes, this definitely isn't the place for me."

I probably -- had it not been for some of the support services that were available here and some of the really, really good relationships that I've formed with people in support services, I probably would have been gone my first year, or had I not enrolled in TRiO, I definitely would have been gone my first quarter because my financial aid almost didn't go through and TRiO worked with me to ensure that I was able to attend school.

I met Felix at a function that was at Green River and we talked a little bit about the TRiO program here and then we talked -- and then Michael Tuncap, whose the Diversity Director over there, I spoke with him and then there was an ex-staff worked here for 10 years who said that she felt that this would be a good fit for me.

I like being able to -- I mean I talk to people generally, I'm kind of shy right now, this is kind of, I don't know, hard. But people are friendlier, like you can approach people even if you kind of seem a little crazy maybe, and people will talk back, even if they're a little uncomfortable at first. But I kind of like that. I think one of my favorite things is that even if people are uncomfortable there's a little bit of a willingness to engage.

I don't know how much power First Peoples has, but as an organization, a lot of what everyone was saying just remaining as a tight knit community and reaching out to everyone, and I don't know if you're the actual group that's able to try to push for other teachers to come in, that seems like a huge strength of the organization. And again, getting in contact with people like Professor Grossman, I've tried to get him to teach classes, but he's too busy to teach graduate classes. He's a really great individual, I wish we'd get a hold of him more, but it just seems like First Peoples seems to be -- if you can get more support and keep on pushing it so that the upper administration has to listen to you, it seems a great way for you to make headway.

I definitely agree with saying, "Know yourself." This is an opportunity that you get to explore about how you deal with things and how -- all of my advice is so unfortunate that I would have to give it to a student of color. Like that's really -- it's really hard to grasp that. But, I would say there is threads of racism, there are systems that you have find out how to be able access it and some of them are hidden and sadly, that might not be different than the world, the real world after you get out of school. It sounds scary and it's something that we do have like a controlled environment because I'm also going to be like, "And First Peoples, I work there, so come on by any time. TRiO is awesome." You know? So, also providing those positives as well as this is going to be a hard, challenging learning experience, but you're not alone, hopefully. To my best ability.

I also work with student activities. So, I do a lot of the shows and stage setup and things like that. There's stuff that they structure and put together for students to come together for I really like.

I also went to a high school that has a lot of people who end up going to Evergreen as well, and so, I knew a lot of people that had had positive experiences.

...These problems are happening and different instances of racism in seminar or not finding your seminar or not finding your community or all of these social aspects that they all kind of collide on a person. And I was really fortunate to be working at First Peoples and kind of have a community there that I could talk to these problems about, get advice about that. And I think that that's not true for all students, that that visibility and recognition isn't there, so those problems occur and they're like left alone. So, not being able to go out and talk about it, or seek any resolution, they fall through the cracks. I think what could help them stay is providing that chance, recognizing that those problems happen.

I actually have three friends of color who went to my high school who are planning to come to Evergreen next year, and my main advice to them was link up with First Peoples, stay in your group, you guys will be a force because you have each other.

Go work at the QuASR, go work at the Writing Center because folks who do who are students of color are really strong peer mentors and that is a really huge kind of -- just leadership opportunity and just in general.

Don't be afraid to go to the Counseling Center. I think that a lot of students experience a lot of stigma around mental health and just wellness in general, so go to the CRC as messed up as it can be and go work out or seek out a workout buddy or something where you can go walk in the woods, even though a lot of people of color have issues with being in the woods.

Definitely it was -- it's a very different community. The people that live here are very different from the people that lived in my communities up in Seattle. And they were very concentrated on this campus. So, yeah, it was like -- a lot of sort of being fearless and also being really scared, but being okay with that and asking a lot of questions and sort of being able to assert yourself, I felt like made me successful.

I would definitely tell them[new students of color] that there's TRiO available, there's just students of color around here that are actually...directed towards people, like necessarily like hang out with them for a day and just tour them around like everything they need as a student of color and as a student to prepare them for how it's going to be because if somebody would have just walked me around and told me where all this stuff was instead of me having to go and [scout] out for it, I would probably be in like TRiO, I'd be into First Peoples more, I'd be doing a lot more than I am already. Like I'm doing it, it's going forward, but I would be ahead of my game instead of being behind necessarily.

There's all these resources that actually really help you -- like TRiO and First Peoples, the Writing Center has been amazing, like amazing resources to me. I also really like that -- I really like that the professor to student ratios are really small for a public university, I think that's really amazing. Because you usually only see that in private schools, and the ability to actually get to know your professor and sit down and have lunch, see them on Red Square have a conversation.

The First Peoples, Longhouse, the student organizations, student activities, particularly the student groups of color have been a really strong network. Like when I first came, the Student of Color Union was a really visible and strong presence, and has kind of not been that since, hasn't been the same. But I think that's because of how certain people graduate and you lose these certain key folks that really held it together. But that doesn't mean I don't it's going to come back, but those are some of the things that really have been the best here.

I changed a lot of my major a whole bunch of times, and then after I had some more experience with talking about isms, like racism and classism..., I sought out more support and I looked into First Peoples and that has been another thing that is why I stay, is I've been able to articulate my experience and articulate these systems that oppress minorities and try to help other people understand them. I don't really know if that would have happened anywhere else. Maybe. Who knows? But that's why I'm still here.

And people who are active in student organizations go and see other students that are having a hard time, just overtly throw yourselves at them, like don't scare them, but just throw that support, send that love to them because they really need that. That saved me a lot of times, [inaudible] people from other student of color groups primarily, like "Hey, haven't seen you around here. You should come by. Come feel the love."

And I really like how friendly -- not just how friendly staff are because staff can be friendly and still kind of be obstinate and act like the gatekeepers instead of the resources that they really should be. But I love how it is so easy to work various resources on campus and how willing to work with you so many people here are. Definitely as a disadvantaged student, I would not have been able to stick through the first year of college if I hadn't have had people who have worked with me, like in First Peoples, academic advising, TRiO, and helped me to jump through

those higher hoops that I had to jump through.

And also being involved with student groups has really shaped the way I look at Evergreen just because you -- once you build that dedicated group of members it's like -- especially as a coordinator, for me is like they have a lot of dependence on me, and so that's part of why I feel like I have value within the school. And kind of going along with that the value that I have with shaping the college's trajectory, definitely with the events that I can throw as a student group coordinator. But also just as a First Peoples advisor, like being given a lot of input on how we are shaping the year, and like [name] was saying, the input you can have on institutional matters as well is really important for students having value.

My faculty know who I am. And also at Academic Advising, as well, I feel a personal relationship with academic advisors who I can trust to get advice from, and at schools in the past, I did not have that experience.

This is my first year at Evergreen and I'm a junior, I learned so much that can prepare me for a career and I found a community that I love and I'm ready for it to be summer, but I'm also really excited for fall and I'm excited to learn more. I wish I could be here longer, but ready to graduate, too.

If I had a chance to talk to some students of color, I'm going to be like, "Hey, really get involved with students groups that reflect what you want or what you need out of this space." It may come off as you're going to be really busy with your studies, which you will be, but you will find that there will be times where you need that space and that you can access that. So, really go for it, get to know folks.

It's always someone available to see you through to get to -- well, the people that I look into when I need it are always available. Always. For the positive encouragement, from professors, teachers, TRiO....

I'm still here because I felt welcomed by a large community of people. [...] Whenever I come here, I just feel welcomed. And being in seminars and having my voice heard, and never feeling like I couldn't speak out on anything that I felt was bothering me. Being able to point out elephants in the room without anybody coming at me after class, whatever I felt was oppressing me at the time was -- has been a great experience.

I would probably say right from the beginning, seek out resources that either student groups or just the multicultural resources on campus, academic advisors, career advisors, seek out that support that you may not need right from the beginning, but at some point I think at Evergreen someone goes into this, "What am I doing here?" type of mentality. So, to right off the bat seek out -- they're there and they have this going on, and if you can't -- you don't have time for student group, possibly ask of the coordinator could email the discussion that was had?

I think that one of the reasons why I've stayed here is because I think I've really built my -- carved out my own community here. And I think different communities within the school have really helped me, made me feel like I'm valued, specifically First Peoples, getting to know people in that group, and just kind of feeling like every time I walk into the lounge, that having that presence and welcoming, and it definitely has helped me because outside of there, now I know those people and I can say hi, and have a conversation with them.

3. Connection to Campus:

- Academic and Support Services: First Peoples, TRiO, KEY, QuASR, Writing Center
- Student Activities
- Informal student activities, gathering places

CONNECTION TO CAMPUS: WHAT IS NOT WORKING & RECOMMENDATIONS

I think too much emphasis is put back on the students. There's a power differential that has been addressed. I mean, it's great that there's so much, "Hey, students, get involved. Do this. You can change the world." But I think that the world is a vastly different place for students of color and that message is not the same. When you tell a student of color, "Hey, you don't see this on campus, go ahead and build it," you're telling them, "Take on more work when you're already overworked." Yeah, it shouldn't be all on a student coming in. It's another form of tokenism.

I would not know about First Peoples if I wasn't a part of First Peoples Scholars beginning of the year. Actually, I wouldn't know about First Peoples if I didn't come to the open house before school started to know about First Peoples to apply for the scholars program. So, it was like if I didn't come and look for a multicultural office or whatever, I wouldn't have known about it.

It wasn't that it [community] was nonexistent; it was hidden, so I had to find it. I had to go out and find it.

And another friend of mine is leaving, right now he's a freshman but he's leaving because -- just the main reason why we would think of leaving, is because of lack of community of students of color. Because some days, we would see each other, but there's just not enough of us and then we ask the question why is there not enough students of color here at Evergreen? And we'd just sit on it, like we just don't know why.

I know two folks who happen to be queer students of color, one of them to left last year and one of them who is leaving this year who when you're facing multiple oppressions, it is even harder to be here at Evergreen. There is no queer student resource center for any kind of queer student, so that is a major disservice to students. I don't care what you say about Olympia and how liberal it is, LGBT students still need support here. But also, there's a certain level of class privilege that comes into play that I see certain students of color who are able to navigate the system who come from upper middle class backgrounds who exceedingly do well here. But lower income students of color here I see leave. They're the ones who really struggle in the class. They're the ones who, God help me if there wasn't like TRiO and First Peoples, like would not still be here. Those programs need to really be bigger and not just a tiny little room because we've outgrown First Peoples, there just is not enough space and for a lot of people, they don't even go in there because sometimes there's not even room for them.

Probably not a good idea to live on campus is what I would probably say. I mean, if that's the only thing financially affordable for you at the time or whatever, I'm not going to advise against that, but then again, it isn't really that much -- it is actually more expensive to live on campus than off of campus, too. So, it's like if you actually do the cost [inaudible], it's just -- with the amount of stuff that you would actually have to deal with, like living on campus as a person of color, it's just kind of -- I would just -- I would recommend that you could probably find yourself a better place to live off of campus and it wouldn't be so much of a burden because you're not going to be here 24 hours a day. You actually have those times to get away because you're already away, you're out in the community with other people of color because there are actually a lot of people of color in this community.

The beginning of this year, I had a problem with trying to get along with the other people as roommates, me trying to get used to them and trying to put myself out there so that they wouldn't put themselves out there and I'm trying to get to know them, and it's just like sometimes, it's just hard because they don't -- they're not trying to get to know you or anything. They just lock themselves in their own room and it's like where's the community at? I asked that. And that's one of the reasons why I would leave, too.

I'm trying to build that community so that I can feel comfortable and be able to process through this curriculum in this school space.

I also think that when you enter an institution, especially if you're going to the Mods or wherever, that the people that greet you should be representative of you. If there's a Native and an Asian, and a Black coming in, then there needs to be a Native and Asian and Black RA, even if they don't work in the building, to say, "Listen, I work on the seventh floor. You're welcome to come talk to me." You know what I'm saying? Or someone to guide them to the community that they're seeking.

I think it would be great if we just called students beyond just about Scholars, just invited them to come to First Peoples, like we don't have to say, "You listed yourself as a person of color" -- well, I guess we should say that so they know why we're calling. But just say, "We invite you to come visit us during your first few days at Evergreen" just to say hi so that they know it's available.

I think more encouragement for students to seek support is really important. But certain types of resources, it's like, all right, well, what is going to be done? I think that that's another place where Evergreen really needs to step up and help students to find jobs and employment and be more active in that because there's this laissez-faire "Just go out and experience the world" sort of attitude and sometimes it's really unhelpful.

First Peoples needs a bigger space and needs to be in a place where it's not so hidden.

For me personally, I came in -- I'm from Mexico and I came in as -- I guess I came in as an international student, I'm really sure, I don't really remember how I registered. But I didn't even know about TRiO until my second here year, so I think that when you come in, if you apply as a non-white or whatever, TRiO should contact you and invite you, be like, "Hey, we have this and this and this," because I didn't even find out about, which is like -- it's fine.

He left because he didn't like the social environment at this school, and I agree with him totally because the social environment was difficult for him for being a person who came from a different state to come into Washington and then experiencing this on top of that, I could only imagine that could be stressful as it is because even being here, just being in this state, and then for me to come here is different.

I definitely think that in terms of just showing how much priority the institution puts on people of color feeling welcome at this school, it's like that's totally -- you can see that by the amount of funding that First Peoples gets and other support that are intended for students of color.

I have a friend who loves the education, loves her class and everything, but she hates it here. She hates the campus, the people and everything. Which I'm happy that she likes what she's learning, but I feel like -- because someone enjoying where you're living is important, too. But it's also part of it is she hasn't gone out of her comfort zone to meet other people that would relate to her. So, I think that's why if she went to leave, that would be a reason why she would leave, is because of that. But I feel like if she took it upon herself to go out and find people, or find a community or something -- like community is like my big, I guess -- then she'd feel more comfortable and she'd enjoy herself here. But that's the only reason I've heard from a friend like why she might leave.

I know that the few people that I know of color who are planning on leaving Evergreen have either been advised to leave for a second, which I don't think is good in terms of retention...

I plan on leaving Evergreen just because I don't feel like I've made that connection socially or academically that would make me want to continue forking out my out-of-state tuition to stay here when I could go back somewhere closer to home and do better than I would do here. I just feel like I've had some really weird faculty experiences, and so, yeah, I think it's like a mixture of the social scene as well as the classes offered and the advice people get.

I think Evergreen is kind of easier to assimilate to if you're really extroverted, which is how I am and I'm kind of like I'm just really loud and out there and meet people really easy and get along with most people. And so, if you're more introverted, it might take you a longer period of time to find your niche, and it does take some getting uncomfortable and going beyond your comfort zone.

I think it'd be really cool to have the multicultural resources on campus correlate within classrooms. So, like having peer advisors go into certain classrooms and like, "Hey, we're going to give a lecture for an hour." Or, "This is a mandatory film that classes need to come to" that First Peoples is putting on or that TRiO is putting on. I think somehow getting these multicultural resources into classrooms would, for one, get these conversations maybe feeling like they're going somewhere at times, and also would help students of color who don't go out themselves to look for these resources, then they just -- like they're directly coming in to the classrooms that they're in, or just around and so they're kind of forced to be a part of it, and then possibly, that would produce more of a safe feeling or that they matter within classrooms.

I think that it really shows how students feel really isolated in the classroom because I don't know where this 25% number is coming from because it sure as hell does not feel like 25% students of color at this school. Is that like most the students in evening and weekends? I just don't know. Is that including Tacoma? Like I just don't know, but I do not feel like there are 25% because when I am in a classroom of 50, there's only 2 students of color in that classroom. So, that's where it really hurts and that's when it starts to get really overwhelming.

I think this year, it really has [made a] lot of difference because of being part of First Peoples and communities like that, but freshman year, it just didn't seem like I had enough people reaching out to me to support freshmen. So, I think that's definitely something that could be improved.

I would agree with what Student 1 said about having First Peoples and TRiO more available and just -- I don't know. Because I've been here for two years and I've never stepped foot in the First Peoples' office. I don't know where TRiO meets, I don't really know what TRiO's about and I feel like every time I walk past the First Peoples' office, the door is slightly ajar, it doesn't really seem like I should be going in there, and so, I just feel like -- even though I see you guys' table out in the library sometimes, I feel like there has to be some bigger way to let students of color know there are other students of color who are in the same boat as you, who want to be your friend, don't worry about it.

I would really -- even though sometimes it's hard and sometimes it's really frustrating because you don't get help right away, but if you need financial aid help or you need academic advising, keep pushing people to give you help because at the end of the day, you are paying a lot of money to be here. In state and out of state, it's a lot of money. If you don't feel that you're getting the proper support, to push for it because you are paying for this, so someone should be able to give you an answer or at least help be with you in the process of you figuring this out if they don't know it.

I think it might be good just for more days -- it might not be called this, but more days like Day of Absence where students of color are getting together to talk more about the issues that they're facing on campus and addressing them and really just trying to be proactive about addressing those issues and actually coming up with coalitions and making change on campus, being more official than just a couple days and then it kind of gets -- it seems like it kind of gets dropped.

I'm very involved in student activities and I'm constantly having to justify and explain the needs of student of color organizations and we got so much pushback from the board, and while there's a good amount of funding to do student activities, there's just always too many really messed up questions that the board will ask us, and so, it's very difficult to navigate that.

First Peoples and TRiO are like understaffed and overworked. There needs to be advocates or like some kind of liaison for these services, or any other kind of like disciplinary action where students of color should not walk into a room and -- you should not be there alone. I think that there should be some kind of advocate or someone so that these things -- more students are leaving and having problems with police services or having problems with disciplinary actions that there is someone with them there.

One reason that I would have left Evergreen is because I was constantly jumping from group to group to try to find the community that I fit in, and then, it was hard for me to find the actual community for me to fit in, so I constantly tried to do it. But that's one of the reasons why I wanted to leave.

[Another reason I thought about leaving]ne was the lack of community, like living here and just not seeing any other Asian students was like, "Whoa, okay," figure out how to deal with that. And also, being in Olympia, there wasn't a lot of Asian students and not a lot of Asian food, either, that I wanted to eat. That was also kind of sucky.

I guess I'd recommend that, like students helping students, advisors helping students, which you already do, so I guess like for student coordinators and other people like that, keep the community up. And keep it -- I think another thing is for student organizations, sometimes you got to break out just meetings on school. Sometimes you've got to go, you have a potluck on a weekend, have a house dance party and get people to bust out and break out of the routine because people like, "Okay, here's another student group meeting on campus at 3:00 o'clock. It's getting repetitive." It's like, well, we want you to come this Wednesday at 3:00, we're going to have a dance party Saturday night. Get you out of this enclosed area.

So, you already said the things I totally agree with. I think that First Peoples and TRiO and KEY services could be more transparent, and I know because I work for First Peoples myself that we call students who have identified as people of color, which actually doesn't include students from the Middle East, so in that sense, we're like totally failing a group of students who have to classify themselves as white anyway.

Some of [the best advice I'd] give a new student and some of this advice I live by to this day, Dr. Joye Hardiman gave me because I addressed the situation about being the only African in the class, or African American, how I identify myself, is to know that there's been a lot of people that fought for you to be where you're at, to not give up because they would be hurt by you giving up. That's [inaudible] -- I got goose bumps just saying it, but there's been trials and tribulations for all of us to be where we are, Black, white, Asian, Indian, everything. So, racism isn't over. In my opinion, we're in a better place, especially being able to speak like this without feeling scared and never let anybody stop you from what's on your heart.

Some recommendations I would have is have these support groups for the people going into seminar because seminar is a very big part of each program and can make or break you in your learning here at Evergreen. And also, have a little bit more programs like -- was it TRiO had a few programs about financial aid and taxes, and then after Evergreen, how you're going to pay back your financial aid and your loans back, would have more of those programs. And then, also, have support in other areas that these students need.

Some specific instances are how I hang out with our students of color versus students that are not of color and how I have to change my attitude or change the way I talk, and I don't want to have to change that. I want to be able to continue to be me instead of changing myself so then it's like me being afraid to [inaudible] these people or need to [right] to these people.

When you see events here that promote cultural diversity and awareness, it's put on by MEChA, it's put on by APIC, it's put on by First Peoples. It's so rare that -- I feel like the institution itself makes the effort to support students and really promote diversity and inclusion actually. Like it's so student-driven and it's so tiring. It is so tiring to have to educate our peers all of the time when trainings could be offered for our faculty and they could be backing us up, they could be real allies or stand in solidarity with us because there are too few faculty that actually are....

The thing that I'm still struggling with is still trying to find a group in the community that I can hang out with, because some of the times that I hang out in certain communities, I can really notice the difference and it's really affecting me. Like I said, I'm still struggling with a lot of the stuff and getting to know the school, so it's like I'm not really grounded at all here, so it's just like I'm still contemplating whether I need to stay or whether I need to leave. And it's not like I'm leaving because, "Oh, I don't like your school or I don't like anything," it's just I don't like certain things in the school that don't relate to me that just affected me so badly that I can't -- like I said, I can't function.

They should fund First Peoples a lot more.

This institution is not funding First Peoples and other student support services as much as they could.

Well, I can say I know a person that started with me this year and they couldn't even complete their class this spring because -- I don't know. I felt like, yeah, they weren't doing the greatest or whatever getting the credits and stuff like that, but there was more going on like that. It was more like turning to drug and alcohol and [inaudible] trying to kind of make it feel better or whatever being here or whatever. So, it's just like to see people do that and it's kind of like you just -- you don't want to -- I don't want to say sell out in a way, but you know what I mean? You just don't want to lose that identity, so you try to fight it as much as you can, but if you don't really have the support and stuff like that, then you go to other things for support. I feel like that's what he did and that's why he's not here.

When I was a freshman, I think that it was hard at times to get involved with things on campus, and I think that that's something that always needs to be a work in progress for students feeling like they can get involved with things because I think that attitude that I had toward clubs and with different community organizations was that they were already set, like they don't need to have any other outside help. I think that really showing people that they have an ability to make change, because when I was a freshman -- for two quarters, I was in kind of a bad situation in my roommate situation and I just didn't feel like they really got it. And he was making a bad environment for me in my room. So, that was, I think, one of the main reasons I wanted to leave was I didn't really think I could talk to anybody about it so much from the school -- I mean, eventually, I actually did go to housing and talk to a resident director about it and they did give me a new room. But yeah, I just didn't think that I was given enough support sometimes as a freshman. I think that especially in housing in the dorms, as person of color, I didn't feel like the RAs were reaching out to me enough, talking to me about that. I didn't really care about movie night, I'm trying to talk about race in the dorms and a lot of the freshmen coming into college, it was the first time they're talking about all these things that need to be get brought up, but I just didn't think they were brought up enough.

They [Housing] don't hire African Americans or anyone else. That's like a tight knit group and the same people get those jobs every single year. And they work there all year, and they will have you fill out an application, but they will not hire you. The application is a mere formality. I mean, the only African Americans or people of color is a friend of a friend. Like, "This is my girlfriend. We're going to be here all summer. Can you hire her?" and she happens to be Black or Asian or whatever. They never, ever give those opportunities to clean out the dorm for those six weeks to people of color. They never, ever give the opportunity to be on RAD for that year of service and job to people of color. Nobody that you see walking this campus is ever in those services.

4. Culture Sensitivity

- Experiences of students with racism, classism, other isms, and privilege, including micro aggressions,
- Pressure to assimilate, loss of identity
- Lack of cultural competency in faculty, staff, students, including myth of post-racial society
- Variations in identity development of students, staff, faculty
- Ally training, how allies have been helpful, not helpful

*THERE WERE ESSENTIALLY **NO** COMMENTS THAT NAMED WHAT IS WORKING WITHIN THIS THEME. A FEW POSITIVE COMMENTS WERE MADE WITHIN THE FACULTY THEME.*

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY: WHAT IS NOT WORKING/RECOMMENDATIONS

Being students of color, we also have the thing of when you're a student of color and you're like coming out of high school and you're like, "I'm doing this stuff and I'm doing it for not only me, but just doing it for your family and all that other stuff," and that's just already there, like coming here, I was like, "Man, I'm doing this for family, I'm doing this for me. I'm representing who the Jacksons are because I'm a Jackson and I know I'm proud to be a Jackson, I'm here."

I like the idea of having anti-oppressions, even the 101's going into all different programs of different topics, definitely in the sciences. I know a lot of the science programs are majority white students, I would say more -- like 90% of the programs are usually white, and so, there's a lot of things that are triggering, there's a lot of things that are offensive, there's a lot of assumptions made in those classes, especially during seminar. And then there's also this -- I've noticed this a lot where it's like not everyone in the class is white, but then because over 90% of the class is white, there's this one -- there's this idea that this one cultural way of thinking is this is the one way and not take into account that different cultures have different ways of seeing things, and I don't feel like that's really -- like a seminar support group would be amazing.

I believe that Evergreen does a really good job of promoting Evergreen and promoting the fact that they do have these intense conversations and the program are full of racial identity and race and class, and the social structures of the United States, but I don't think there's very much promotion of the actual different ethnicities that attend here and are a part of those conversations and are a huge part of the learning in those programs. So, I think that they could do a better job of promoting that part of Evergreen for those students so more students can come.

I contemplated leaving because of ignorance in seminar and in classes, in the classes I was in. I got tired of listening to people talk like they had experience it and they knew what their -- and that they were like the professor and they were trying to teach us, but not listen at the same time. So, the days that got hard in seminar and the days that I felt like I was alone was when I contemplated leaving.

I definitely found that my life experience didn't really fit so well with the college campus and that there was a lack of understanding combined with a lot of students who think that they know all about these social issues and then kind of drown out the voices of those who have experienced them.

I don't frankly know what to do about seminar and the student environment as a whole, but I think that perhaps more outreach to find students who need support or -- because I think that a lot of people don't really know where to look for support and I think that a lot of students who also seek support don't feel like they're listened to enough. Especially one thing that I've encountered, and I think that this also happens with students who are younger than myself, because as you grow up I think that -- and this is what I've experienced, is that you get so used to not being listened to when you're under 18 that it just becomes this habit of you just don't believe that it's going to happen. And maybe you don't know how to really, really fight against the system in ways to where you will get your voice heard and you don't necessarily realize that there's that increased amount of societal importance, really -- it's messed up -- but it's like the stratification [of society] creates its importance once you are of a certain age where your voice will be heard.

I don't see as much future career support from Evergreen and I don't really like that. And I feel in my situation, because I've experienced being down and out, I want to have a more concrete lead to my future and more support in developing hard skills needed for the workplace and more connections from the college that I eventually graduate from

I feel like some of the experiences that people from Reservation communities have this really - there's a lot going on there and actually -- because I don't come from a Reservation community, but I know a lot of my friends do. The life there is much more difficult than a lot of people can -- like I said, a lot of people come from really hard experiences and Reservations are just another form of that. But it's like there's an additional cultural layer. I feel like when the students come to Evergreen, either faculty, staff, or administrations may not understand those cultural ways most people live and interact, and I think that inability to translate those two causes people to -- either causes conflict, misunderstanding, frustration, and in this case with this one student, I feel like they just couldn't -- they didn't have the energy to having to keep push through and explain -- like say, "I come from this family and [inaudible] come from a really, really hard experience and you don't understand all the intricacies of that and how this white institution is a visible face to other forms of oppression that have come before," it's like you look at that and...

I have a really close friend who talks often about how they were really interested in leaving a lot, and then they say the thing that saved them were ILCs. Because specifically the seminar space was so unsafe. They were part of Gateways and they found that even in Gateways, there were a lot of students that were not up to par with their anti-oppression work. And so, they just kind of said no to programs for a while and did ILCs and then they also recommend working with -- they said Chico was like the greatest person to work with, but working with faculty of color on ILCs.

I think too much emphasis is put back on the students. There's a power differential that has been addressed. I mean, it's great that there's so much, "Hey, students, get involved. Do this. You can change the world." But I think that the world is a vastly different place for students of color and that message is not the same. When you tell a student of color, "Hey, you don't see this on campus, go ahead and build it," you're telling them, "Take on more work when you're already overworked." Yeah, it shouldn't be all on a student coming in. It's another form of tokenism.

I think that it would be really cool for the athletic programs and the sort of, well, minority groups that are offered here, like TRiO and First Peoples to combine because I think that -- well, actually I know that the athletes are Black or some minority, but I know that we go and travel, we face extreme racism and discrimination. I think it would be really cool to get those together so you could use that to inform the rest of the population at Evergreen.

I've been here for about two and a half years and only experienced two black instructors. So, that's been really hard because I've seen friends of mine going through the woes, all types of struggles, maybe family struggles or just not being able to relate to some of the stuff that was being taught, and the instructor would be a white male, and my friends would be African Americans and you'd be like, "Man, you just don't know," and sometimes I don't want to write about this. You're bringing up stuff that people like us like to maybe not forget, but not it be brought up over and over and over and over, and us be the only ones in the room to talk about it and to talk about it with. And there not be places of real comfort for us to go to and speak with somebody, being the lack of African American instructors, or people to comfort us, or that been there, that could say I know what you mean.

One of my classmates is Native American and she's the only one out of 38 of us and she feels like she's consistently being used as the token example during -- since again environmental justice it ends up coving a lot of Native American history ends up brining her along the conversation, and she finds it very upsetting and irritating.

I'm not going to say I was bamboozled into this, but it was like they told me, "Oh, yeah, it's a really good fit. There's students of diversity in every class, there's this, there's that," so basically, they're lying to me. I got to class and was like, "What is this?" I went to academic advising and was like, "I was lied to. I was told there would at least be like, what, five students of color.... I go in there and I'm the only one and I'm just like, no, this is not cool."

I've also felt this in seminar, too, because a lot of times when I'm speaking, I'll be interrupted by somebody and I won't get to speak then on out. And it's usually somebody that's white privilege, I'm sorry to say, but it's true. And usually if I tried to stop them, they'd stop me immediately and I'll be like, "That's rude. Why are you stopping me? Why can't I go on with what I want to say when this person can interrupt me to go on with what they were going to say?" But I've noticed that a lot. At first, it was kind of like, "Oh, it happens. Everybody interrupted everybody." But it kept reoccurring and I had addressed that, but my professor is like, "I don't see it," and then I asked other people and they didn't see it, either, so I was having to feel like trapped in, so I couldn't really get the answer to my question, like why is this happening? And they were like, "We don't see it."

Just not really feeling like I'm in a large, ethnically-diverse place has been hard, and it's one of the reasons why I stay at Evergreen but I'm not really a fan of Olympia, and that's been something that I'm constantly like, "All right. Let's just get these four years over with so then I can move to another place."

[I] feel like with expanding the curriculum, it would also help -- I know students that are bilingual, they're Spanish speakers and English speakers, but their first language is Spanish, so they want to take more advanced Spanish classes in literature, like more advanced classes that will better -- like grammar or academic writing skills in another language, not just Spanish, but all that is offered is introductory classes, so then there's this feeling of these classes are not meant for further development of language skills, they're more for people...who want to travel abroad and want to know how to speak Arab or Spanish a little bit of the few words before they go abroad. It kind of feels that way, where it's like so hard to find a program or a class, like a night class that actually is more challenging.

The advice that I would give to a new student coming here is be sure who you are and what you want because that's what keeps me driven.

I also agree about the housing. As a student of color in the dorms, that was really difficult sometimes, especially because you're just getting a lot of young students that haven't had any sort of conversations or conversation about privilege or anything, and then even if they have, they're interested in [inaudible] a passing thing and looking like they're friends. So, yeah, I got like a lot -- it was not fun in the dorms.

I know two folks who happen to be queer students of color, one of them to left last year and one of them who is leaving this year who when you're facing multiple oppressions, it is even harder to be here at Evergreen. There is no queer student resource center for any kind of queer student, so that is a major disservice to students. I don't care what you say about Olympia and how liberal it is, LGBT students still need support here. But also, there's a certain level of class privilege that comes into play that I see certain students of color who are able to navigate the system who come from upper middle class backgrounds who exceedingly do well here. But lower income students of color here I see leave. They're the ones who really struggle in the class. They're the ones who, God help me if there wasn't like TRiO and First Peoples, like would not still be here. Those programs need to really be bigger and not just a tiny little room because we've outgrown First Peoples, there just is not enough space and for a lot of people, they don't even go in there because sometimes there's not even room for them.

I really felt that's why he left, he left because of the social scene and just the people here are not friendly to people of color. I feel like it's a really rude state [inaudible] say it. But that's how I feel. I honestly feel like they are not friendly towards people of color because they haven't been taught properly how to be friendly towards people of color. And so, I feel like to change this so that people can come, it would be to properly teach any community, like anybody period because there are other people of color that treat other people of color like they don't know them. But it's like to properly teach everybody how to confront each other, whether it be color or whether it not be color. So, yeah, I wish that could change so he could have been here because I miss that guy a lot.

I see it. And it's not addressed because it's the age of color blindness. You put a Black man up there on a pedestal and now people forget and now all they want to talk about is, "You were once slaves and now you should be happy because you're not" -- but it's a new slavery and you can take us out of jail and give us a minimum wage job while motherfuckers is billionaires. [That's a lot] to say. And my people are leaving this school because they feel that way. You put a white man in front of us and it's the same damn thing. Take this education like we been feeding you for years and lose your identity.

Most of them are white and most of them are at the end of their academic career. I know one African American RA. Yeah. So, I mean, Evergreen touts inclusiveness, but they're not a practice of it

My teacher, Peter Bohmer, he had to reiterate, "She has a right to her opinion and these are historical things that did, in fact, occur. The mere fact that you don't like them does not make them any less valid."

You can't just flat out do that to somebody and then be like, "I don't want to feel uncomfortable. I just want you to feel uncomfortable," because that's what they do a lot here, make you feel uncomfortable and you feel like you can't say anything, you can't do anything, and you can't fight anything, color or non-colored. This is not just like the color history, this is just the issue of like there's people in general that are just hammering on you, like certain things, you just like I don't want to necessarily deal with that, and then, they spill it all on you and then you want them to do the same, but they don't want to do the same, which doesn't make any sense to me.

But not only that, they laud it as diverse, so they go through great lengths to say the Blacks, the Asians, the Natives, the whatever, you know what I'm saying? And they have all these separate little groups when you should be able to participate in any one that you want to be in and join any one that you want to join

So really, there's like 4% Blacks, 2% Asian, 1% -- like that, okay? And then they came up with a grand number to seem diverse. So, don't be fooled by the 24%.

Going through this transition -- before they even have to go through that transition, tell them over the summer to be like, "Do this. Do this, get to know yourself because when you get on campus, you won't be as shocked when you use these kind of things, or it won't be as hard for you to deal with it because then you'll already have gone through it and have talked yourself through it before actually getting to do it because once you do do it, it won't be like, ah, man, this is completely new. It will be more like, okay, I've prepared myself for this, I knew this was going to happen, but I can deal with it now."

That's another thing that I don't like about Evergreen, is as soon as seminar gets split, you can feel it and they're like, "She's trouble." And I'll give you an example. We had a talk about Angela Davis and all the white girls are for her, she's wonderful and she did great things. Well, no, she didn't and if you really know her history, she was a patsy for the Panthers. She's the only one that was involved in the Panthers who had registered guns in [inaudible] seminar about her. And the white people went crazy. They were like, "How dare you desecrate her? You need to be watching what you're saying," and that split seminar.

Yeah. They don't hire African Americans or anyone else. That's like a tight knit group and the same people get those jobs every single year. And they work there all year, and they will have you fill out an application, but they will not hire you. The application is a mere formality. I mean, the only African Americans or people of color is a friend of a friend. Like, "This is my girlfriend. We're going to be here all summer. Can you hire her?" and she happens to be Black or Asian or whatever. They never, ever give those opportunities to clean out the dorm for those six weeks to people of color. They never, ever give the opportunity to be on RAD for that year of service and job to people of color. Nobody that you see walking this campus is ever in those services.

Then you get all this other stuff put on your plate and you just like, "Dude, I already had this. This is already hard enough, just going through this and being like you're representing yourself." So, it's just like not only are you representing yourself here, you're representing your family, and then it's like when they disrespect you, you feel very disrespected because you feel like they're disrespecting your family. And that's how I highly feel, like when I was charged with all these things I was just like, "Hold up. You basically calling me like a -- you called me a criminal and I'm not a criminal, I'm a really nice person, actually."

They also promised students of color would be here, they would be represented here. They're represented, but not in the way that I would like them to be represented. I would like to be represented as human beings, not as the Black community, the Asian community, the this, the that. To me, to be represented as something worth being instead of just like a color. We're just labeled as a color instead of being labeled as a student of color. It was just like, "Oh, well, that's that Black kid who's kind of smart." Or, "That's that Asian kid who's really smart. He knows how to do this." Like lot of stereotypes are thrown around here, too. So, that's all...

And two, what I want to say is this 24% thing, that means they lumped everyone of color together. It doesn't mean there's...

Another thing I've heard of why students have left is feeling that Evergreen and Olympia and progressive in environmental, sustainability, and gender and queer rights, but that racism has been put as like a thing that we don't really have any more within these spaces, and it's still very much there. And so, they felt like when they had to call out someone or talk to someone that said something racist -- or had to tell someone about it, it was put in this private sphere of, "Oh, well, that person is that way," and not that it's like this collective systematic thing that's still very much present. So, they just didn't feel validated here, I guess.

Another thing that CRC does is they have those people down there that work those stations that as soon as you disagree with them, they want to call campus policy, and then she comes and wants to create a report that you're violent and can't be dealt with low key, you know what I mean? The person that has filed the report or called the police at CRC is automatically right. And I don't think that that's fair, especially to the African American men that frequent that building to get a report generated on them because they told some little counter keeper, "You're wrong." So yeah, that's another little line of racism that runs through Evergreen

Because it's a lot like what she said, because I look white and like your average white American male, when you're with other white looking people, you would be -- maybe you wouldn't be surprised to hear what people are saying. You're like, "That's really goddamn racist, you bastard." And you're like wow. Just because you don't know -- you just think just based on your perception, you say some of those jokes, you're really shocked, like, "Wow, that's really messed up."

Being able to have someone come into programs where it's like break things down for a lot of students that wouldn't normally go to anti-oppression trainings or wouldn't go into those conversations, making sure that they hear that because I feel like that's where we need it. Like for a Day of Absence, for example, like all the students of color in my class were there that day, were in class that day because it was not -- Day of Absence was mentioned, this announcement, but it wasn't given the -- it wasn't like a thing that was encouraged, yeah, that's the word, encouraged for students to go to. And if you miss a day, then you miss -- you still had the same -- you can't really miss a day because it's a lot of materials that they go over.

But as soon as I come back here, I feel closed so I don't just -- like I'm from California or somewhere else because it's like the looks that people give you, you can just -- you feel this uneasy tension everywhere you go because you feel like everyone's looking at you, but they're really not. But it's just like you feel uneasy as a person of color, you feel like you're not safe, you feel like you can't speak your mind, you feel like you can't do any of that.

But I also think that when you enter an institution, especially if you're going to the Mods or wherever, that the people that greet you should be representative of you. If there's a Native and an Asian, and a Black coming in, then there needs to be a Native and Asian and Black RA, even if they don't work in the building, to say, "Listen, I work on the seventh floor. You're welcome to come talk to me." You know what I'm saying? Or someone to guide them to the community that they're seeking.

[Alice Nelson] leads the best seminars on micro aggressions I have ever -- she's so great. But I mean, still, right after that I had this girl come up to me and talk about, "I've had Black friends my whole life..." and it's just like, "You weren't listening." That kind of shit happens.

I have been in -- [Alice Nelson?] leads the best seminars on micro aggressions I have ever -- she's so great. But I mean, still, right after that I had this girl come up to me and talk about, "I've had Black friends my whole life..." and it's just like, "You weren't listening." That kind of shit happens.

But it's still like the punishment of it is way too harsh for what it is, really. Because yes, of course, everybody's dabbling with it, everybody's messing with it, but it's just like the punishment versus the Black male and the white male is totally different, and I know it is because my friend even tells me what he got and he got caught the same time as me and only got community service and I got way more than him, and I was outraged. I was outraged after that. I was mad because I was like, "So, you're telling me you got caught the same amount of times and you got this much and I got this on top of that on top of that?" He was like, "Yeah, I'm basically telling you that." So, it's like the sentences are totally biased. They're totally biased towards a certain group of people, whether it be like just any student of color is going to get a different charge than a white male. And that's just the truth.

The other person of color left. She left the institution, she was in student government, she's biracial and kind of was confused about how she wanted to identify, but everybody was calling her Black. And yeah, she -- she was put upon to make discussions happen and she was like -- I don't want to say fragile, because she's not, but she's not -- she wasn't someone that went out into the fray. She wasn't there to make a point, she was there to learn. But, yeah. I think she's doing pretty good where she's at now, but that's frustrating because she's actually really an intellectual person and as someone with a degree from this institution, I want my degree to mean something and that means having more people like her out in the world with the same degree.

You have to be kind of confident and fearless to navigate. You love that? To navigate this school, you really do.

Then also at the student level, being used as a person of color to -- in every class you take where there is that one Race 101 week to have to sit in seminar and tell students why you're being an asshole. It's tiring, and as a student of color, you shouldn't have to be the teacher every single quarter. So, that's always a sign.

You have to remember that this is a scaled down model of the world and the racism that runs through it is concentrated because this is a scaled down model, but that doesn't mean it shouldn't be abolished and looked at and dealt with. So, I'm just -- and that's the things that should be taken to the people that work here and that can make the changes.

Definitely seminars and talking a lot about difficult conversations, and not feeling like faculty were able to do anything -- well, not that they weren't able to, that they weren't doing anything or like stepping in and saying, "What you're saying could be offensive to someone here." Or even at times saying, "We're not going to get personal when talking about race," and I'm obviously the only Black person in the room. It's things like that where I think I just left classes just feeling like what is the point if we're going to be presented with these conversations and then nothing actually gets resolved? So, that was really difficult.

Do you think that it would make sense for, say, First Peoples to come and meet the athletes and just say, "Here's what we do. Here's what you can come and learn about if you need it. Here's the kind of support," same for TRiO?

How things are dialoged on in seminar... And the class can be divided really quickly to have groups for or against you, and you have to be very accommodating in who you are and what you are to sit through it. And so, I just think that that is -- if they're on the lookout for inclusion, that's something that should not be happening in any college arena, let alone right here where the most liberal on the globe.

I also have had the experience where the faculty are not supportive of students of color. I feel like just my personality is like if you're not giving me what I want, I'm going to bother you until you get -- because that's your job. But for somebody that doesn't have that inclination, which is totally understandable, I don't think that the faculty take into consideration positionality because they're like, "We're all in a place of higher learning, so we're all the same."

I definitely agree with saying, "Know yourself." This is an opportunity that you get to explore about how you deal with things and how -- all of my advice is so unfortunate that I would have to give it to a student of color. Like that's really -- it's really hard to grasp that. But, I would say there is threads of racism, there are systems that you have find out how to be able access it and some of them are hidden and sadly, that might not be different than the world, the real world after you get out of school. It sounds scary and it's something that we do have like a controlled environment because I'm also going to be like, "And First Peoples, I work there, so come on by any time. TRiO is awesome." You know? So, also providing those positives as well as this is going to be a hard, challenging learning experience, but you're not alone, hopefully. To my best ability.

I did also encounter issues with house because while you're a student, it can be difficult to search for housing here and it can be hard to find affordable housing around Olympia. I don't think the school offers enough support with it, in fact, the listing of apartments that housing gives out is specifically made so that they can say, "Oh, look. It's so much cheaper to live on campus." But that's from my observation, of course that's an opinion. But I have looked it over and I -- it's ridiculous.

I don't know how to explain it. It's just a feeling, more like the feeling of just coming here to kind of like be an individual and -- I don't know, like be proud of yourself as an individual and proud of yourself as a member of a minority culture, but then you feel like you get kind of, in a way, like assimilated into a different subculture. I don't know. I feel like just kind of losing your sense of identity as a person.

I don't like being lied to because I was prescribed that I was going to be able to do all these things when I got to Evergreen. I was excited. I was pumped. I was like, "Yeah, I'm going to do this. I'm going to studio recording. I'm going to sign up for a job and do this." I did all those things and all those things were wrong -- I wouldn't say wrong, but I would say all those things were shut down. Like I applied for a job, didn't get a call back at all. I tried to do these studio recording things and they're not letting me have access to it because I'm a freshman -- because I wasn't technically in the music class, but I was.

I feel like that would have been really beneficial for people to go to Day of Absence and Day of Presence, both. Like also like the white population go to Day of Absence events here and it's just like -- I feel like culture and race is not really even thought about in a lot of science programs and it should be.

I get frustrated because I want to be able to say that sometimes to people who come from HUD housing, Section 8 backgrounds, but because of the polarization here on campus, I can't do that. And I'm like if I say, "Yeah, I know exactly what it's like to life on welfare and have people talk down to you at the grocery store," and not everybody of color has this background, but it happens sometimes and kind of statistically probable that you're going to come across someone that doesn't have one parent or has to take care of their siblings. So, I can say that with some authenticity, but at the same time, because of everything being black and white here, it reads wrong. It doesn't come across the right way.

I had an incident too here. The question was like I have to take drug counseling classes, meaning like I got caught on campus indulging marijuana and most people on campus will -- like even white people, like most white people do it too on campus. And like I got caught in the midst of it and I talked to the student and affair, and she required me to go to a seven-day challenge, the name of the drug counseling class, and I was wondering like why am I the one to go to it when there is no -- there's no one -- well, this is only my second time getting caught, why is there so many white people getting caught and they're not attending these seven-day challenge every Friday when I have like things to do.

I have had faculty that are very careful, but it's still I find that every conversation about race and privilege we have at Evergreen is like an intro class so it doesn't get anywhere because I feel like people kind of do it and they're like, "Got it." And it's kind of frustrating.

I have met a woman who was a student for a year and she was from India and she took a class that was kind of based on her country, I guess, and she just like really did not like how this class was taught, felt like the faculty just had no idea what they were talking about and she just felt targeted in this light, and so she went back to India.

I know I don't know what you're talking about because I've never experienced it. You can talk to me about and educate me about if you were willing to, but that doesn't mean I understand it. And that half-assed, "Oh, I understand where you're coming from" thing and this is not just some racist thing, it's in all sorts of discussions, when someone half-ass talks about, "I understand what you're talking about," that's one of the most infuriating things possible. "I understand how you feel." No, you don't. No, you don't.

You were saying about you being compared with others students, it's like for a lot of us, especially if you're coming from an inner city high school or community college, this might be the first time that you're in a classroom where the majority of students are white. And that was very difficult and I feel like I don't know what can be done. I mean there's really not much that can be done about that, but maybe some more support to prepare students for that, just to literally mentally get ready for that and maybe to have some kind of cohort of -- I just don't know what can be done for seminars.

I struggle with keeping a sense of my own identity in a way because it's like I'm not -- I don't know, I kind of feel like I've seen a lot of people come here and they're kind of like forced into not being themselves, if that makes sense? And so, it's like I understand being challenging and trying to get you to change your -- get a new perspective in a positive way, but then it's kind of like when it gets to the point where you feel like it's forced upon you or else, you're kind of like even pushed out. So, I've seen a couple of the students leave because of that. You feel like it's become too much, you can't take just being the minority out of the [inaudible].

I think -- I don't really know how this could be done otherwise, but I think students are sort of required to go into these diversity conversations and the diversity panel, I think it's good that they go, but I don't know if it's as effective as it -- because they are not given option or... So, I feel like it just leaves this attitude where race is always a burden to talk about and so, when people of color in the classroom bring it up, it's like they're the angry ones and they shouldn't bring it up. And so, I feel like people who may feel marginalized in the classroom would leave for that reason, just because they're always being tokenized or looked on as the angry one.

I think a lack of cultural competency is a reason students may choose to leave. Well, not choose, but are forced to leave, I should say. That's a big common thing I've found with certain Native students who are struggling right now or are about to get kicked out based on the credit and ability to keep up on the program, or just community stresses. I know one student has so much going on at home with family on the Res and it's just really consuming. It's like they're straining to maintain themselves here, and so that starts affecting their academic work, their social life and things like that that keep them going on campus. And then when they go to talk to faculty about it, there's like not always such a firm understanding. That actually happened to me the other day. I'm not going to leave, but I just see that as an example of, okay, this is happening with that student.

I think all faculty and staff in Evergreen should have to take a mandatory anti-oppressive workshop at least twice a year and stages of identity workshop. I also think that would help if programs passed surveys around. When you have three quarters of just in those beginning and after, just to feel -- or maybe beginning, middle, after to feel how their students are doing. A lot of the times students feel like they can't speak about these issues that they have, I mean like to the faculty and they say it to someone else. And it's like, okay, well, I'm really sorry that you feel that way. Maybe to have these surveys would help faculty better see how students are doing or how they're feeling about the way discussions are going and go from there

I think from other students of color that I've talked to as well, seminar has been a really important place in the sort of planting those seeds of wanting to not be at Evergreen, and particularly because -- I think -- and also my frustration comes in, kind of this neoliberal, multicultural place that's like, "We love everybody. Not really..." And it's just really hard to navigate because -- especially in student government and things, I interact with a lot of students that pride themselves on their anti-oppression sort of work and framework, and then they use that as -- it's not a conversation. They're just kind of like, "Yeah, you know, I got it." And if I say something wrong, like it's not wrong, basically. And so, I feel like once they have sort of done their dues, sort of, of anti-oppression training, then they're like, "Yeah, so then all people of color are now just people and I don't have to see their color because I know the history," and so this sort of positionality goes out the window and it gets really frustrating sometimes. I think that comes up in seminar.

I think students of color leave Evergreen with a sense of betrayal, almost. A lot of people have talked in here about how important family is to them, and I feel like for people of color and students of color especially, there's this need especially because our cultures are more statistically impoverished or not getting degrees in higher education, there's this need for us to go to college and get that degree and get a job and help our family and all of that kind of stuff. In coming to Evergreen, which is not sort of -- it's not a traditional school, it's this really weird model that's not necessarily going to be accepted when you graduate from Evergreen, you are taking a risk and you take this risk because of this promise of a more progressive student body and faculty where you'll be accepted more and you have this intellectual conversation kind of horizontally with students and faculty, and that's not what you get. And you get here and you're in class and you're facing all of these problems that everyone's been talking about. If you're not going to be enjoying your time in that way and you're also missing out potentially success in the future because you're choosing to go to Evergreen, you're losing more than you are gaining, and I think that's why a lot of students decide to leave.

I think that Evergreen has a low key thread of racism that runs through it, and it's practiced in a way that you're like, "Did that just happen? Did I just hear that?" But it's consistently so that you know it happens, not so much the professors, but the things that are set forth in the classroom by other students and different committees around here. Example, the Diversity Committee: two people could give the same application, but because somebody on the committee might have had a run-in with you, their application doesn't get the same consideration, that's not what they proposed themselves to be. It's supposed to be equal and inclusive.

It really shows how students feel really isolated in the classroom because I don't know where this 25% number is coming from because it sure as hell does not feel like 25% students of color at this school. Is that like most the students in evening and weekends? I just don't know. Is that including [inaudible 1:05:33] Tacoma? Like I just don't know, but I do not feel like there are 25% because when I am in a classroom of 50, there's only 2 students of color in that classroom. So, that's where it really hurts and that's when it starts to get really overwhelming.

That might go with why students of color are leaving, or what we can do is that -- we're not only holding an identity as a student, as a worker, as participating in the community, but we are holding the burden that we may essentially hold throughout our lives because we are of color and that's part of what's happening in this country, but it's just really -- it's louder here.

One of the biggest frustrations for me coming to this school was the lack of training from faculty. I think that as a necessary part of becoming faculty at Evergreen, they should have cultural diversity training, they should be trained about identity development, different stages people are at. They should be trained how to address race in a classroom and privilege in a classroom and how much space and agency people are taking up. Because it just makes me mad that people consistently take up more space than others in the classroom and they don't even realize it because that's what they've been doing their whole life, but the faculty have no idea how to address it, or maybe they don't even know that that's a problem and they just think that, "Oh, why are the people of color so quiet?" Well, maybe it's because they feel marginalized in the classroom.

I think that there isn't a lot of training for folks who work there. I used to work for an outdoor program that was entirely centered around multicultural leadership and diversity inclusion, and so they specifically would have trainings for educators of color. That's just one example of folks who do that, so I feel like if they were to have some more training or to partner with First Peoples or something, or actively -- like you were saying, if there were more people who worked there at the CRC that reflected the community, then that would be more -- that would also help, too.

While certain student groups are really supportive and I'm glad that they do a lot of work that they do, it sparks these conversations sometimes with people that I know that just are so disheartening and then there's no avenue afterwards to have a mediated conversation about these things. I think something that -- if anything, what has made me feel like leaving is the repetitive micro aggressions that at that point aren't micro aggressions, it's like repetitive and constantly in these spaces where I should feel safe. I've talked to other students of color about this notion of when like going into seminar and you say, "Oh, this is going to be a safe space," and that is really controversial because it's like a safe space for whom? And so, I think that's an important part for faculty to qualify because it should not be safe for everybody. You have to be very clear about who it's going to be safe for. And yeah, I think that that piece about people who pride themselves on anti-oppression work, who are actually oppressive, which is a lot of people here, that's probably one of the more disheartening things.

Back to dealing with white students having this authority to feel they deserve this information, they have this right to it, that I feel like along with what other folks said, Evergreen is this space for white, middle class people to come and be like, "[Inaudible] we have this freedom, it's like a hippy college, we get to the end of this" -- the first year I came here, we had people -- the student group was formed about of the principle of appropriating cultures because they felt it'd be so enlightening to them. So, they're taking everything from everyone, and one of the most visible things was visible Native culture or whatever that means to them or what it -- which is going to be more Plainsian style. Yeah, we all live in Teepees and shit.

I would echo some of the things with the CRC -- personal wellness is really important to me and it really helps ground me and be able to stay in school, and the CRC is completely not a welcoming space for students of color, the outdoor programs, not a welcome space for anybody who is not a tall white man. And it's really difficult to find extracurricular things to do that are welcoming to students of color that are accessible and not ridiculously expensive, too

I would echo the subtle racism and discrimination at the school. I think that while there are -- I've had a lot of workshops and trainings at the Student of color Conference and being involved in First Peoples and so, I feel like a lot more prepared than when I first came to school to be able to navigate that. But it would be amazing if a white faculty could just step in and say, "Hey, that's not okay." Or just address it. Obviously, you're saying Peter Bohmer does that, but gosh, I haven't seen -- with the exception -- I had a program with Chico Herbison and I feel like -- and that was my first year, and so, that was two quarters and it was a ridiculously diverse -- and it's not ridiculous -- it was amazingly diverse class. I feel like it was the complete opposite of what my experience was like when I left that program in the spring, and then that spring quarter, I felt like my heart fell and I felt like I lost all of the positive energy and support that I had. I went from a class of like 18 students of color to a class of 3, and I thought, "I don't know if I'm going to come back" that year. It was incredibly difficult.

The first thing that happened at Evergreen that really threw me back was the freshmen diversity orientation thing. The whole setup of it was just very bizarre and I was like, "Is this what Evergreen is about?" Like that was just what it thought it was like. To point out groups of people individually and have to say you are welcomed makes it seem like before we said it, we didn't like those people, we didn't mess with those people, it wasn't okay. And then, to get to African Americans and say, "What tribe in Africa are you from? What tribe do you belong to? What country are you from?"

I'm also doing the same thing because it's hard coming from the high school for the diversity to come into a high school that's kind of non-diversity, and it's difficult for me because I've always been around that and not being exposed to it now, it's difficult for me to even process that

I'm not obviously a person of color. I'm a bit Native and that has been a lot of my identity, but because I look white, I hear a lot of the other stuff that's going on and it's really hard when I'm in experiencing -- and last year, because our president is Black, it seems like it's opened the door, people feel comfortable talking about the racism in a way that would never have been [inaudible] in the past. But because I'm invisible, I hear these things that I think is actually pretty valuable, but I don't know how to translate it. There's a lot of white man's burden stuff going on couched in humor that is completely atrocious. People are guarded when there's at least one person of visible minority status and so, things are said that are awkward, that are painful, that aren't authentic at times. So, like when somebody is sitting there and being visible, the conversation is stilted and really hard to bear.

I'm trying to think of other... I think it might be good just for more days -- it might not be called this, but more days like Day of Absence where students of color are getting together to talk more about the issues that they're facing on campus and addressing them and really just trying to be proactive about addressing those issues and actually coming up with coalitions and making change on campus, being more official than just a couple days and then it kind of gets -- it seems like it kind of gets dropped.

I've also experienced some students of color expressing feeling isolated from other students of color on campus. That's mostly been mixed race students, I want to say, and there's definitely differing experiences that people have. But also, the feeling of being very isolated on campus, feeling of not being listened to and also just -- there are also a lot of people from areas which are not ethnically diverse at all. And I laugh at this because I'm from Seattle, but I encounter people who come up to me and they talk about, "Oh, it's so diverse here in Olympia," and they're from the Midwest. [Laughter] I know, right? But then I also hear completely the opposite things and I'm more on the side of opposites, but it's just -- those people also bring with them a lot of interesting ideas and attitudes about life and that can be isolating and result in a lot of singling out.

I've also felt like it's been also kind of good, though, because I've had a fair amount of Native faculty, and so that's a different experience for me. I know that's not the same all around because I know there's other faculty color that aren't represented on this school as well. But back to my point about how I feel like Native folks don't always fit something into people of color category, we all have -- everyone has internalized oppression in some way, or dealing with these things. And so, I've been also excluded from [POC] spaces just kind of based on how I view my people's history and things like that, that there can even be ways in which people of color can marginalize Native folks in regards to space.

I've been forced to be the token Indian in class, like -- not so much by professors, sometimes they have good intentions, as people have said, but it still ends up in this really like, "Oh, God. Here it comes. Let's as [name], the Native American, how he feels and how his people feel about these..." But it happens more from students, I don't want to say fortunately, but it does happen from students more than it does from faculty.

It was way too expensive and I did find that it was an unwelcoming environment living on campus because there was -- well I just -- as a nontraditional student in general going to school, I felt very unwelcome most the time and I don't know if it's partially because I appear younger, so people don't really -- I get to be accepted and treated as a traditional aged student, but I'm not and I just generally didn't disclose my age because I didn't really want to be isolated for being a non-trad student and I think that part of that has been that I have been disregarded in a lot of ways because I have life experience that people don't really count me to have.

It's great that folks can get involved, but how the hell is anybody going to go up against a faculty member? It would be nice if there was some training for allies, for folks like me who don't fit the mold necessarily, the black-white setup really eliminates people -- the well-intended people that are trying to find a way but can't because they're not on your side or that they're forced to be on another side, so it'd be nice if there was an anti-oppressive, how to become an ally course that says, "Hey, yeah. It sucks that you are the face of privilege, so how do you get beyond that hurt?" Because it's a really hurtful experience to find out you're a victimizer and that you want to be friends and can't be. And I think that if that were done -- kind of like -- Beverly Daniel Tatum has this book *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* And it is such a phenomenal book. People are reading Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and that reads significantly different to white kids, and it's one of the reasons why our program was shut down, because I stood up and I said, "Paulo Freire is great. But what you guys are reading and what people of color are reading is completely different."

It's just like, "Why don't you want to talk about it? You made me feel uncomfortable. Let me make you feel uncomfortable for a while."

It's like they don't notice when they try to raise the bar or try to put you at that level, they don't understand you are the only -- or you are the few that are like students of color and you don't understand something and then when they try to put you at that level, you're just like, "Hey, hold on. You realize I'm the only -- there's like me and there's that other guy that's like Black or Asian or something like that, and he's struggling with it, too?"

It's really because of the power differential, it's on the faculty, and it should only be on the faculty at the end of the day and to be like, "No," because who else is going to advocate? I can try and advocate because I'm older and I've been here longer and I kind of know that, yeah, if I lose funding, I'll figure out a way to come back maybe, or maybe not. I kind of -- I've seen the other side of it. I can survive. But for folks who are coming here as freshmen who are 17, 18, 19, to have white faculty members not protecting them is active institutional oppression. Out of that class, after that first quarter, there were two people of obvious color that maintained, and it was a significant number of people of color in that class that I hadn't seen and experienced. And those two that maintained and stayed where ballsy.

My first year at Evergreen I almost left. I just didn't feel supported, but I also didn't seek support. I didn't feel support and I didn't seek support, and I didn't feel -- I was learning about different cultures and I was learning about race and I was learning about class disparities and classism, but within my classes, I was like the only Black person and I just didn't feel heard, I didn't feel listened to. So, I felt like my experiences didn't really matter. So in that sense, I didn't feel supported. And I looked into going to schools back home in Ohio because I just wanted to go to the place where people understood where I was coming from.

My first year I also almost decided to transfer out or to just not come back and no transfer. My first quarter, I took an introductory science class and I just felt so lost where I felt like the expectations were -- the expectations of the professors were mostly expecting that you already knew statistics or you in high school already had an introductory class to a lot of science classes that I didn't have access to. I didn't go past chemistry, mostly because it wasn't offered. And so, I felt like I was falling behind to the point -- but no one really understanding that it was -- I felt like I was being told that I wasn't smart, but I was like, "You're not looking at the social conditions of my schools and a lot of schools of communities of color and low income communities, they don't have resources and they don't have these classes." So, it's like to expect someone to just jump from biology or chemistry and expect them to understand a more in-depth science topic is a really big jump for a lot of people, and I just didn't feel supported. I had tutoring and I still, even with tutoring, I didn't feel -- I would go to class and still be really confused because the class kept speeding along and I was trying to catch up.

My first year, I saw two Saudi Arabian men who were here and they felt like they weren't going to come back, I don't know if they did or not, but they just felt like there was just a lot of xenophobia within the community, I think, in Olympia

One guy, he would just tear into -- we had two instructors in winter, and one of them, a white woman, she's well-intended, but I think that just taking her into a low income housing project and then having do like a [potluck] or something would be really good for her because she doesn't quite get it. You don't talk back to a Black man -- there's this -- like she was fair skinned, blue eyed, blonde, smaller and there's sexism, right? So, there is -- [inaudible] there's no hierarchy, but there kind of is. If you're in a position of authority, if you're a white woman and you're shutting down a Black male student who has the audacity to talk about these things, you're in the wrong. And she was doing that. And he's so ballsy, he's so cool. He just keeps going. He doesn't give up and I mean, I'm hardheaded and persistent, but he is that to the nth degree.

One thing that I've heard recently this idea that I think there's this huge assumption made at Evergreen that we're in this post-racial society, that we can talk about race in a way that maybe this idea of like hipster racism where people make these really weird and unnecessary jokes about racism because they know about history and they think that they're in this post-racial society so they can make jokes about it now. They don't realize the impact of their words. So, yeah, I think that this assumption that's made on the campus makes it so people feel like they have the agency to kind of just speak freely about it without really checking themselves and checking their privilege. So, I think that makes it a really hard environment for people of color to thrive in.

Peter Bohmer would always say, "Why are you always quiet in the classroom?" and I think that was a huge degree of why, is because at that point in my identity development, I wasn't comfortable speaking out against how uncomfortable I felt and how much people were making generalizations and stereotypes about people. So, I think that's a really big thing to me that is a huge flaw.

It's really hard to where it's like I want to take science classes, but I also don't want to ignore all the real conditions inside the communities that make these sciences unreachable, or sometimes it's like if we're learning about climate change, why are we not studying about the most impacted communities at the same time?

My first year, you mentioned housing, and I definitely left housing very, very quickly. I left it after one quarter only despite the fact that I had to pay a fee, and part of it was kind of a lack of paying attention to students' needs, insufficient support for maintenance, critical maintenance issues, the fact that I was not treated with regard to my health needs, I needed to get off of the meal plan because it was making me sick and because I didn't have any parents to advocate for me, I basically was completely shut out of any kind of way to get any refund time and I lived off of \$900 that quarter, which is from loans and that was my entire spending money. And I had this whole \$1,000 meal plan that I couldn't eat from.

My teacher's really hard on me at times, but it's like he doesn't understand that I'm a freshman. It's more like, "Well, you're a student and you should understand this," but he kind of like puts me at a level and scale of everybody else, and I'm just like why are you scaling me to all these other people? These other people haven't done the same thing that I've done. They're not experiencing it the way that I'm experiencing because this is a new subject and it's different, and I'm really like, "Hey, this is hard," but it's like he's putting me on a scale with all these other people and for me, it's really oppressive because I'm the only student of color in my class. So for him to compare me to other people is just like you're comparing me to people that are like white and high upper class and have more material than I do. So, it's like basically just saying I'm stuck with him because I'm a person of color and I can't really learn this and I can't do that, and I directed that towards him and he got -- like he -- through the rest of the quarter, he was just like, "I'm not going to do that again. I never noticed you felt that way," and stuff like that

Some specific instances are how I hang out with our students of color versus students that are not of color and how I have to change my attitude or change the way I talk, and I don't want to have to change that. I want to be able to continue to be me instead of changing myself so then it's like me being afraid to [inaudible] these people or need to right to these people.

Sorry to interrupt, but like a lot of effort and a lot of -- when you see events here that promote cultural diversity and awareness, it's put on by MEChA, it's put on by APIC, it's put on by First Peoples. It's so rare that -- I feel like the institution itself makes the effort to support students and really promote diversity and inclusion actually. Like it's so student-driven and it's so tiring. It is so tiring to have to educate our peers all of the time when trainings could be offered for our faculty and they could be backing us up, they could be real allies or stand in solidarity with us because there are too few faculty that actually are...

The faculty have no, no idea how to manage things. Last year, I was in Elections Education and Empowerment with three super white faculty members, all really well-intended people, and had gone through some training, but still, missed the boat entirely. We actually had students of color, not student of color, in the class and in seminars that first quarter we were talking about statistics and the elections, but we couldn't talk about Obama's race. There's people here that are not middle class, they're like over -- like they have a lot of money and they're here, and they can shut down conversations so fast. It's because they have a class distinction in the way that they talk and in the way that they have agency with the faculty. Like they're not afraid to talk to the faculty, they're not afraid of losing credits because their financial aid and their ticket to be here is -- it's not in question. So, they don't have to sit on their hands and kind of go, "Okay, am I going to point out fucked up this is?"

There's been a couple major things. One, being the only person of color in class a lot of time, a lot of times. I took a political economy racial, on race class and gender, and race would come up and I'd be the token in the class. I'd feel like I was speaking for my whole race rather than my individual experience in life, which was hard because a lot of white kids or whatever would

come up to me like -- try to talk to me like they knew or something like that, or try to comfort me. And I'm like it's not a situation that you can comfort.

There's ways in which students -- Evergreen's held as this place of inquiry, which it is, I feel like there's really genuine inquiry here, but sometimes, I feel like people don't have the ability to view themselves or how to kind of step back and be like, "How am I applying this inquiry to people which I want something from them and they have this feeling of like, oh, I've been raised with this, therefore I know I can have it, so I'm going to approach you no matter what because I feel like I deserve this, I need to know this information because it's important to me to know." I'm like that doesn't roll well with students of color.

They have a tradition of at the beginning of the quarter, you will either have a potluck with your classmates and not really the beginning, maybe like week four so that everybody can bond over lessons. Well, where I come from, you don't eat with people that you're not involved with. You know what I mean? If you come over to my house to eat, you're intimately involved with my family. Sometimes seminar raises so much controversy that -- that's a forced thing, it's not a choice thing.

They like, "All Black people get high, it is what it is." But when a majority of the drug use is by students that's not of color, but they're ODing out there in the Mods and they're sending out memos about parties in the forest and people having alcohol poisoning and none of those people are being processed, either, to go to any kind of drug treatment. They have problems that can be best served by some counseling provided by their parents and not a stain on their record.

This quarter has been the hardest and I've been missing class and I've just been really burnt out because of my accumulation of stress over the years with how students of color are treated or viewed within a class of -- as the forum says, 25% of the school is students of color, but then, that's a lot of whiteness around to have an impact on how you're -- you live in your space. Though, there was a program I left within the first day because faculty had some weird woo-woo things about Indians and I was like, "I can't do this," so I [inaudible] get out right away because it was going to be some weird thing for Halloween, they're like come -- there's people in there who were appropriating Native culture and like visibly wore it just on the first day, like on them, like either on tattoos or just in the way they talked. And people would come up to me -- if they knew I was Native, then they would ask questions. If they didn't, they'd ask me, "What are you? Where are you from?"

This week I finished class, I have an environmental advocacy class, and one of my classmates, he says after the class, "You know what? As a future old white guy, we have absolutely no one else -- since we're talking about issue environmental justice, we have no representation from anyone else but other currently old white guys. And me being one, it feels kind of irritating because I have no perspective on what else is going. It's just the same kind of community, and there's no extra knowledge or extra perspective brought to the table."

We had one gal, she didn't care if she was there in class or not, sometimes she'd just show up. She went on this tirade about how she felt about race and being white and how it was racism is so over and not a problem. You could hear it, like that murmur when a crowd -- there used to be this thing on ships where people would start hissing a little or just kind of murmuring a little, and that was a sign that people were about ready to mutiny, and that was happening in the class. There was -- yeah. People were starting to do like almost the call and response sort of thing and she didn't realize what was going on and nobody stopped her. I kind of asked her like a clarifying point to see if what she was really what she was saying. And she just made it worse. She was just digging herself down further. The faculty just kind of did not stop it. They literally should have stood up and said, "You. Now out. We're talking. This is actually in breach of social contract across this campus. This class is about privilege, it's about statistics, it's about what is going on now. And you are so far off into outfield and you can't even recognize people around you are about ready to like come after you, but are holding back because they are actually classier than you."

Well, the representation-- I mean, shoot, even as far as a poster or something, all I see is -- this is really awful, but all I see is just a lot of white people that like to dress up as hippies and like to dress up and do all that crap, but then, when they speak in the seminars, it's based off a book. When race is talked about, it gets very defensive on that end instead of the minority's end.

Olympia in general is not -- it's not a diverse place. And I think when students of color come here, it's like you don't really see your culture represented on campus at all unless you're in a student group, or have the time to do the student group because a lot of students don't have the time, they're either working or they're part-time or they...don't have time. And I think that's a really big issue, I feel like there's no representation of the culture.

When I was a freshman, I think that it was hard at times to get involved with things on campus, and I think that that's something that always needs to be a work in progress for students feeling like they can get involved with things because I think that attitude that I had toward clubs and with different community organizations was that they were already set, like they don't need to have any other outside help. I think that really showing people that they have an ability to make change, because when I was a freshman -- for two quarters, I was in kind of a bad situation in my roommate situation and I just didn't feel like they really got it. And he was making a bad environment for me in my room. So, that was, I think, one of the main reasons I wanted to leave was I didn't really think I could talk to anybody about it so much from the school....But yeah, I just didn't think that I was given enough support sometimes as a freshman. I think that especially in housing in the dorms, as person of color, I didn't feel like the RAs were reaching out to me enough, talking to me about that. I didn't really care about movie night, I'm trying to talk about race in the dorms and a lot of the freshmen coming into college, it was the first time they're talking about all these things that need to be get brought up, but I just didn't think they were brought up enough.

When you're in seminar and you are seminar with people from Boston and even Concrete, Washington, that haven't been exposed to African Americans or Natives or Mexicans, or just white privilege, they want to have a set of rules that oppress you because they're intimidated by what it is you're setting forth. And so, in those arenas, I've always had to -- so what? I spend \$21,000 to be here a year, and learning is challenging, it's painful, it's hurtful, and I want to be challenged and it is my duty to challenge you. So, I don't like the covenant thing where we're going to all stop you when we feel uncomfortable. Learning is uncomfortable, especially when you're learning outside of your arena and you're learning about things that have nothing to do with your life.

5. Finances

- Financial aid as key to keeping students in school
- Barriers/aids in access
- Racism in hiring students of color on campus, in Olympia

FINANCES: WHAT IS WORKING

You just have to advocate for yourself and you have to be a self-advocator. Even the lady in the scholarship office, she said, "Listen, you've wrote 10 scholarships, 7 of them are wrong. So, this is what you need to do." And she sat there with me until I got the outline and could write the scholarship.

I applied to almost every other small liberal arts college and I was going to go to Reed, Overland, or Hampshire, and then my parents were like, "Well, can't pay for that." So, then I applied to Evergreen kind of late in my senior year and came.

I wouldn't say that the Evergreen tuition is at all affordable, but I think as a low income out-of-state student, it is more affordable than most other options for students, especially considering the unique sort of model that Evergreen has to offer.

it was the most affordable institution in Washington, and so that was a big factor, too.

I came to Evergreen because it was a lower cost than the college that was my first choice.

I consider myself lucky in some ways, although it hasn't been easy, in that I did have a lot of experience in jumping through some of those hoops, and so, I learned how to do crazy things like downloading the entire manual for who gets financial aid and who doesn't, and I have done dependency status papers other places, so even though I was admitted when I was under the age to independently receive financial aid, I was able to maneuver my way through getting approved through the process that is used for that. So, I've been able to use that to my advantage, use that ability to find that knowledge and be that one who manages to slip through.

Without the TRiO grant, the scholarship, and the foundation grant in the original financial aid package that they gave me to begin with, I don't know if I could have did it.

FINANCES: WHAT IS NOT WORKING & RECOMMENDATIONS

My first year, you mentioned housing and I definitely left housing very, very quickly. I left it after one quarter only despite the fact that I had to pay a fee, and part of it was kind of a lack of paying attention to students' needs, insufficient support for maintenance, critical maintenance issues, the fact that I was not treated with regard to my health needs, I needed to get off of the meal plan because it was making me sick and because I didn't have any parents to advocate for me, I basically was completely shut out of any kind of way to get any refund time and I lived off of \$900 that quarter, which is from loans and that was my entire spending money. And I had this whole \$1,000 meal plan that I couldn't eat from.

It was way too expensive and I did find that it was an unwelcoming environment living on campus because there was -- well I just -- as a nontraditional student in general going to school, I felt very unwelcome most the time and I don't know if it's partially because I appear younger, so people don't really -- I get to be accepted and treated as a traditional aged student, but I'm not and I just generally didn't disclose my age because I didn't really want to be isolated for being a non-trad student and I think that part of that has been that I have been disregarded in a lot of ways because I have life experience that people don't really count me to have.

I've had students of color say that they don't feel like they have time to get residency and it only takes six credits and so they felt like they needed to go home, so I guess finances is definitely one.

I think that also one of the frustrating that I've encountered from some students is with how work study is awarded. I think it would be helpful to perhaps have a system that is slightly different. Now, it's just first come, first serve, but I think that if it were changed to where -- you know how if there's a large program, they'll just usually have 25% of the seats reserved for freshmen? Well, if you had -- say, First Peoples had the ability to award a few people work study and if you had maybe an application process for work study after the first awards had been made, if, say, there was a reserve of 25% to 10% of the school's total work study and then that was given out to different support services, partially, and then also, maybe there was a more competitive process to get it? Like not in a negative way, but a way where people could tell about their situation, why they need it because I've encountered so many people who really need it, could really use it, they're like working mothers, two kids, they go to school. I don't know. They go to school fulltime and it's just ridiculous that they aren't able to get it because of some weird kind of petty reason. I think that that would be helpful.

I know that finances are a huge struggle because financial aid is really particular, like picky about how they help you. I know that when I've gone to maybe ask a question, it's almost like a hurry up and, "Okay, did I answer it? Okay, let's go." I've figured that with a lot of the sort of groups that are supposed to help that that is often the case, like you're going, you're in a line, it's a long line and you're waiting, and you get there and your question's hurried and you leave feeling like you're not really sure still. Yeah. I would say that's a huge reason why people are leaving.

I just haven't contemplated on leaving because otherwise I'll end up homeless.

I did also encounter issues with housing because while you're a student, it can be difficult to search for housing here and it can be hard to find affordable housing around Olympia. I don't think the school offers enough support with it, in fact, the listing of apartments that housing gives out is specifically made so that they can say, "Oh, look. It's so much cheaper to live on campus." But that's from my observation, of course that's an opinion. But I have looked it over and... it's ridiculous.

He left because of financial aid banned him from getting it, I guess, and I guess he's also in debt with them, the school.

The frustrations that I've heard from other students include -- financial is definitely one of them. I think that also some students didn't really get the help that they needed in order to get through the hoops of financial aid or other things, or they just took what they heard as, "Oh, crap. This is the end of the line."

I think that financial help and help finding jobs is really important for people of color and I don't think that -- like Evergreen, it's nice, it's chill, it can be really -- I don't know. But sometimes you feel like people just don't address some of the critical issues that need to be addressed and one of those we need help for students financially, and I know that the economy is on a downturn, but that just means that we have to try even harder.

But I definitely have found many students who haven't really found the support that they need or don't have the right answers in front of them, don't know maybe how to find the resources or the resources are limited. I mean, 75% of Evergreen students receive some form of financial aid. The issue, I think, is because we don't have -- we have a lot of people who need financial aid, but we don't have enough of it and so, example the work study program is really based on first come, first served, which is why I didn't get it my first year because I had to submit paperwork to be independent.

Employment: before I got hired on campus, it was just really hard in Olympia to find a job and I needed money.

You're sort of trapped here sometimes because of the lack of GPA. If you don't finish your -- you could lose funding. If you have trouble with faculty, you're stuck with them for three, four months, and your financial aid is riding on it. So, you don't have a choice to opt out or to take that time out, take a week and go to the coast or whatever and surf. Some kids do that because they have the money and they have the freedom to do that.

Just to be very honest, I would not still be here if I had not gotten scholarship paid. So, similarly, tuition awards and the TRiO tuition waiver was -- I would have dropped out this year if I hadn't gotten extra financial aid. It's just not enough to get full tuition and it's just not enough to have to rely on work study to feed yourself and pay for rent and other things.

I'm also an out-of-state student, so finances are -- almost every year -- I've actually take a year off because I couldn't afford to stay here. So, this is my year coming back and I was working -- I have work study, so I was working before I left and I'm working again and I'm working two jobs this year, and it's just really hard to balance both paying out-of-state tuition where it's financial aid doesn't cover everything, so at Week 1, I owe over \$1,000 and I have no idea how I'm going to get it. And then, still taking classes that are -- for me, they're really difficult and at the same time, being confused and I have less than a year left, but that has been for me throughout my whole time here is like what should I be taking or -- I don't know. It's just really confusing. I feel really confused at Evergreen.

Diversity and Equity Standing Committee Focus Group Guide

Why Do Some Students of Color Stay at Evergreen, and Why Do Some Leave Evergreen?

(90 minutes total)

[Note: This script and set of instructions are intended as a guide for the focus group moderators. Moderators discretion in phrasing, using probes and additional questions or explanation may be necessary to accommodate the group dynamics. Focus groups necessarily have a conversational aspect, and will almost always diverge at some points from a script.]

WELCOME

FB: Thank you for coming today. We are members of the Diversity and Equity Standing Committee and work in the Student Affairs Division at Evergreen. My name is Felix Braffith and I am the Director of TRiO programs and my colleague is Raquel Salinas. She is the Coordinator of First Peoples Advising located in Student and Academic Support Services.

FB: Today we've brought you together to discuss why some students of color choose to leave Evergreen before finishing their degree. This particular focus group is part of a larger needs assessment process that Evergreen is conducting to support the 25% students of color on campus. The institution is actively recruiting more students of color would like to know the reasons why some stay while others decide to leave before graduation. Your responses will be shared only in summary along with with other focus groups summaries we gather the next two weeks. We pledge that no one outside this room will ever know that you said a particular comment. There are no right or wrong answers to anything we are asking today - and both positive and negative comments are valuable to the discussion. Given the diversity of positions represented here, some questions may bring up very different perspectives on the same topic. It is important to us to hear a variety of opinions, so please speak up especially if you have something to say that is different from what you have heard so far.

FB: We want to audio-record the discussion so that we have an accurate record. The researchers will keep the recordings in a locked file cabinet in our research office. We will transcribe the focus group tape within 3 weeks of the focus group, at which point the audiotapes will be destroyed. Transcripts from the focus groups will not identify the source (names of individuals and institutions will be omitted) of any statement, but will only transcribe what is stated, with no names or identifiers. Statements that could identify individuals will be revised so that identifiable information is deleted.

FB: Before we begin, I'd like to review a few important points:

FOCUS GROUP LOGISTICS

- The focus group should take ~90 minutes
- Bathroom locations
- Water/food if available
- What to do if they need to leave
- Cell phones/pagers

FOCUS GROUP GROUND RULES

1. Please say exactly what you think/feel. Don't worry about what I think or what your peers think.
 2. Talk about your experiences/feelings and what you've heard others say about this issue.
 3. This is an open, safe forum. Express your opinions, and respect opinions of others.
 4. Please speak one person at a time.
 5. This discussion is being recorded, so please speak up and speak clearly.
 6. Again, please keep what you hear today confidential. In order to protect your confidentiality and the confidentiality and that of the other participants, please refrain from repeating anything said in the focus group outside of that setting.
- TG: We're going to begin recording now. [Begin recording at this point.]

INTRODUCTION

RS: You are a self selected group of students that have stepped forward to talk about the reasons why students of color you know have left Evergreen before graduation. We are also very interested to learn about the concrete ways you have succeeded at Evergreen. Lastly, we would like to hear your suggestions that would enhance support for students of color. Please think about identifying ways academic programs, support services, residential life and/or student organizations can incorporate your suggestions into future programming.

RS: During this focus group we will ask questions and facilitate a conversation about how Evergreen might be able to achieve a higher level of success for students of color. Please keep in mind that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to any of the questions we will ask. The purpose is to stimulate conversation and hear the experiences and suggestions of everyone in the room. We hope you will be comfortable speaking honestly and sharing your ideas with us.

Does anyone have any questions at this point: about the focus group or about the study in general?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

RS: Let's begin with some general questions.

1. Why did you come to Evergreen?
2. What is your favorite thing about Evergreen?
- 3a. Why are you still at Evergreen?
- 3b. What has happened during your time at a Evergreen that has made you contemplate leaving?
- 4a. Why are students of color leaving?
- 4b. What are some of the reasons you have heard over the years?
- 5a. What could have helped them stay?
- 6a. What recommendations do you have to improve the experience of students of color at Evergreen?
- 6b. What advice would you give a new student of color at Evergreen?

FB: Now, if you haven't already, I'd like to give you the opportunity to share any experiences would benefit the conversation. Possible follow up questions:

- How do you think the conversation went?
- What were the major challenges?
- What communication strategies did you use?

- What do you think could have improved this conversation?

CLOSING

FB: I want to thank you again for sharing your time and insights with us. We truly appreciate your contributions. Just a reminder, in order to maintain confidentiality, we ask that you not share any specifics of what was discussed here with anyone from outside this group. If you have any further thoughts to share after tonight's discussion, please feel free to contact myself or Raquel at the email address or phone number listed on your consent form.

Thank you again!_____