

# THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE: AN EXPERIMENT MATURING

by

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## INTRODUCTION

The Evergreen State College is a survivor—one of the few major experiments in curricular innovation arising from the decade of the sixties which remains strong and growing at the beginning of the eighties. In the hope that some lessons can be drawn from this educational experience, it will be the intent of this paper to provide a descriptive account of the founding, evolution and development of the college over the past eleven years.

I think it important from the outset to admit that no one view of this institution's history and development will be either complete or free from debate. The choice of important factors and their analysis are dependent upon one's views of the larger society and the direction one sees that society moving. It is therefore both comforting and humbling to know that two fellow founders of the college will respond and critique the views expressed here.

The innovations in both curricular design and college governance will be treated because they were developed together to be mutually supportive. Our current curricular and organizational structure will be described and analyzed for its strengths and weaknesses, again from my own perspectives, which may be strongly debated on this campus.

An effort will then be made to apply a theoretical structure, dealing with the growth and development of organizations, to the concrete experiences of Evergreen. The intent of this section will be to predict and seek insight into the developmental concerns, problems and crises which lie ahead of us with the hope that early recognition of likely problems will help with their solution.

Finally, relative to this structure, I will give my own views of the directions this institution must take in the near and immediate future to continue our development and viability as an educational leader in the decade of the eighties.

#### AN ACCOUNT OF THE FOUNDING

The Evergreen State College is the first and only publicly funded, four-year institution of higher education founded in the State of Washington in the Twentieth Century! During the era of great expansion of the higher educational community all over the country, the State of Washington invested its growth efforts in the existing five state colleges and universities (U.of W.; W.S.U.; Eastern, Central and Western Washington State Colleges) and in the development of an extensive network of twenty-six community colleges.

In 1965, a new demographic study concluded that the state would require an additional 12,000 places in higher education by 1980, beyond what could be provided by the expansion plan then underway. Thus, in 1967, the State Legislature authorized the founding of a new four-year state college in southwest Washington. Initial funding was provided for land purchase; a Board of Trustees was appointed; an administrator selected; and procedures for selecting a site were initiated.

Legislative intent seemed to contain three somewhat competing elements:

1. To serve the needs of Southwest Washington where much of the demographic growth was expected. The authorization bill referred to "Southwest Washington State College" in language which paralleled the authorizations of the other three regional institutions (Western, Central, Eastern)
2. To provide services to state government and its employees. The selection of Olympia, the capital city, as the site for the new college seemed to give us this special opportunity and obligation.
3. To develop an innovative structure that would not simply duplicate the existing academic resources of the state. The State Senator who headed the Temporary Advisory Council of Public Education (which recommended the new college in the first place) said at the first meeting of the newly appointed 'Board of Trustees', "It was not the intent of the Legislature that this be just another four-year college; it is a unique opportunity to meet the needs of the students of today and the future because the planning will not be bound by any rigid structure of tradition as are the existing colleges, nor by any overall central authority, as is the case in many states." <sup>1</sup>

The original Board of Trustees seemed to give priority to the third and most clearly stated element of legislative intent in conducting its search for the founding president. Dr. Charles McCann, then Dean of the Faculty at Central Washington State College and an articulate spokesman for individualizing the college learning experience, was selected. The resulting commitment, to develop an alternative to the existing educational institutions in the state, was taken as a "mandate" by the early planners, to the exclusion of the other two elements of the founding intent. This commitment, while crucial to our

1 Gordon Sandison, Minutes of Organizational Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the New Four Year College, August 30, 1967 College Archives, TESC

subsequent development, has come back to haunt us on many occasions during the past eleven years.

A second factor of our early history which continues to influence our development was the considerable rivalry which developed over the location for the new college. Rather elaborate proposals and justifications were submitted for sites in the vicinity of Vancouver, Longview-Kelso, Olympia, South Tacoma, Port Angeles, Redmond, Arlington, and even Richland-Pasco. The loss of this contest, especially by the Vancouver and Longview-Kelso communities, was sorely regretted and is still a source of irritation for certain people, whereas the winning of the contest was almost as traumatic and locally irritating for many of the old-time residents of the greater Olympia community.

The State of Washington was both generous and farsighted in providing funds for a planning year (1970-1971). This enabled a group of 17 faculty, 3 Academic Deans and the Provost (under the watchful eye of the President) to work on curriculum design, governance structure, student admissions policies and faculty recruitment. Predictably, this group represented a wide range of educational philosophies, pedagogical methods and academic dreams. Fortunately, it also represented a considerable amount of experience with some of the other educational experiments of the sixties: New College of Florida, the General Program Experiment at San Jose, the Interdisciplinary Science Program at Oregon State, Prescott College, S.U.N.Y. at Old Westbury, and the national Outward Bound Program. The war stories of these veterans considerably tempered our wilder dreams.

The competition between differing educational philosophies and methods was never resolved during the planning year. But some overarching principles did emerge which enabled us to get on with the work. President McCann had defined the new college largely in terms of a series of negatives: no grades, no departments, no faculty ranks, no requirements, no football teams, etc. But we soon learned that there were some positive consequences which emerged from each of the negatives and we were expected to follow them wherever they would lead: interdisciplinary studies, narrative evaluations, minimum red tape for both faculty and students, cooperative rather than competitive learning. The original three Deans were hired because each brought some experience and some technique for implementing these principles: Mervyn Cadwallader because of his Meiklejohn-like interdisciplinary programs at San Jose and Old Westbury, Donald Humphrey because of his interdisciplinary science programs at Oregon State and his strong interest in self-paced learning and Charles Teske because of his experience with the independent study learning mode at Oberlin College.

Much of the curriculum planning effort of the first year was devoted to detailed design of the strongest possible and most diverse set of Meiklejohn-like interdisciplinary programs we could conceive. We called them "Coordinated Studies".\* The titles of our first year's programs, enlivened by the free imagination of the reader, will indicate our creativity: Human Development; Political Ecology; Space, Time and Form; Freedom, Causality and Chance; The Individual in America; Environmental Design; Contemporary American Minorities; Individual, Citizen and State; Man and Art; Communication and Intelligence; Human Behavior. Each of these programs was a team-taught, full time (for both students and faculty) interdisciplinary study program involving four or five faculty and eighty to one hundred students.

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\*For historical background and additional organizational details see:  
 "Experiment at Evergreen", Richard M. Jones, Shenkman Press (San Francisco, 1981)

The "Book Seminar" was the heart of the curriculum, original sources were used instead of textbooks, and the author was the teacher while the rest of us were "colearners". The "Faculty Seminar" was (and remains still) the chief vehicle through which the faculty share their expertise and help their team-mates to become interdisciplinary teachers. The academic program was bound together by a "program covenant" which set forth the duties and the expectations of all parties and defined the basis upon which credit would be awarded. "Interdisciplinary Study", although never really defined, was the hub around which all else revolved: program planning, faculty hiring, catalog copy, etc. Still undefined, it continues (in multiple interpretations) to be the centerpiece of our curricular efforts.

The second, though somewhat minor component of our first year curriculum was the "Individual Learning Contract". This mode of study was generally called Independent Study, a phrase we chose to avoid because of the misunderstandings which had developed during the sixties (i.e. students heard the word Independent, faculty heard the word Study, and there was a mismatch of expectations from the beginning.) In our version, the student and the faculty member worked out a contract in advance which dealt with such details as the project definition, reading list, meeting schedule, final product of the study and the means by which it would be evaluated.

As the last two paragraphs indicate, we spent some time and effort in the development of our own jargon to avoid previous stereotypes and to express our philosophical principles. "Learning how to learn", that is, helping students to become independent of their teachers, was one of our principal educational goals. Rather than asking students to follow a set major or a list of institutional requirements, we asked students to "take charge of their own educations."



A key concept in all our planning was "flexibility". "Living with Ambiguity" became the norm at early Evergreen because we desperately wanted to avoid premature "hardening of the categories".

To avoid decision-making squabbles of many of the earlier educational experiments, we developed a governance structure to serve for the first three years of our operation. A group was assembled in the spring of the planning year, the "Committee on Governance", or "COG I" as it was later called, composed of administrators, faculty, staff, and some borrowed and future students. This scheme worked surprisingly well and a document was produced which was only slightly modified at the end of the three-year initial period. Decisions were to be made by administrators who were "locatable and accountable", but only after consultation with those most affected. The "Disappearing Task Force" (DTF) took the place of most standing committees in providing the consultation. The principal standing committee ( composed of five faculty, five administrators, five staff and 15 students ) was called "The Sounding Board" and was primarily an information-sharing group. An active appeals process was devised, starting with informal mediation and ending, when necessary, with an All-Campus Hearing Board. Much of this apparatus still remains intact and functional.

And so, after a truly breathless year, in September of 1971, we were almost ready to open with fifty-five faculty and just over one thousand students, eleven Coordinated Studies Programs (with 950 students enrolled), Individual Contracts (with some 70 students). I say "almost ready" because none of the buildings was quite complete! We opened the new college in churches, faculty homes, Legislative meeting rooms and forest campgrounds with the spirit of true pioneers. That spirit carried us through the first difficult year.

## EVOLUTION OF THE CURRICULUM

Over the course of the first year, three developments occurred, some by design and some by discovery, to diversify and enrich the curriculum. Our initial enthusiasm for Coordinated Studies ( "If it's good for 100 students, it will be good for all 1,000 students".) was somewhat modified by the problems associated with specialized training for advanced students who were seeking careers. Before the end of the first year the "Group Contract" had been invented and the first of these (Evergreen Environment) was offered in the Spring Quarter of 1972. This is a scheme in which a group of 20 (or 40) students and a faculty member (or two) agree to study a particular field or subject in depth, full time, for one or more quarters. The study can be either student or faculty initiated, and we have had many successful examples of each. We retain this format for most of our advanced work.

Also, during the first year, we developed our first Internship placements within the context of an advanced Coordinated Studies program. This combining of the theoretical and the experiential was so attractive and successful that we also developed an internship program for the whole college, to be implemented through the Individual Contract mode. A Cooperative Education Office was established to develop placements, locate Field Supervisors and monitor the system in detail. Academic credit, however, is awarded by the faculty sponsor who has an obligation to provide related academic work, meet regularly with the student and prepare a final narrative evaluation for the transcript. This option has become one of the strong and effective parts of our continuing curriculum.



A third element, developed extensively during the first year, which still strongly influences our curriculum, was the use of a significant and real-world problem as the focus for either a Coordinated Study Program or a Group Contract. For example, the Environmental Design Program of that initial year, as one of its projects, took on the study of the probable impact of the new college on the rural, agrarian neighborhood in which it had been located. Preparation for this project required the students to do considerable theoretical study in economics, sociology, environmental biology, land use planning and community relations. By the middle of Winter Quarter, the groundwork had been laid and the problems defined sufficiently to begin to bring local citizens and neighbors into the discussions. From this, a citizens' group, The Cooper Point Association, was formed; a professional Land Use Planner was hired by the Association to work with the students; a local zoning ordinance, The Cooper Point Plan, was devised and presented to the County Commissioners for extended debate and final approval. Many other excellent examples of the use of real-world projects as the centerpiece around which a study program is designed could be cited in, for example, Applied Environmental Studies, Marine Inventory of Puget Sound, Energy Systems, etc.

To prevent premature rigidity in the curriculum, and to encourage a set of new and innovative proposals, a conscious decision was made that the first year's curriculum should self-destruct at the end of the year. Thus, the first Fall Quarter was only a few weeks old when the Deans began to accept proposals for the second year's curriculum. Every year, for the first five years, we operated in this frenetic manner, seldom repeating programs unless there was considerable student demand to do so.

A first attempt at long-range curriculum planning, in the fall of 1972 (called the Lake Quinault Conference) attempted to address some of the difficulties encountered in our initial curriculum: there was no way to serve part-time students; foreign language, mathematics, dance and some other subjects did not lend themselves well to our "one thing at a time" study mode; skills development, especially reading and writing at the somewhat remedial level, were not being handled well; the artists among the faculty felt overshadowed and under-represented; the institutional commitment to education for minority students was strongly questioned.

The results of this conference, though minimal, were regarded with considerable suspicion and some hostility by various groups of students and faculty who wished to preserve the purity of the initial curriculum. In spite of the resistance, a part-time studies program was initiated through a group of courses (we called them "Modules") which were to be taught principally in the late afternoons or evenings and which would therefore be available to the Greater Olympia adult community. To allow our regular students access to these courses, we made it permissible for faculty to plan "three-quarter time" programs and allow students who wanted to take a course to do so. The courses were to be taught by regular faculty who were in the "Contract Pool" and could balance out their teaching loads by taking fewer Individual Contract students. We committed ourselves to more faculty hiring in the Arts and to the establishment of a Learning Resource Center for skills development. We reaffirmed our determination to serve minority students through the hiring of additional minority faculty and the inclusion of Third World concerns in all parts of the curriculum.

For Evergreen, the period 1972-1975 was one of expanding enrollments, curricular fluidity, trial and error, some risk-taking and some consolidation. But there were also danger signals on the horizon which we chose largely to ignore: enrollment troubles at two of our sister institutions, faculty exhaustion (burnout) at our own, student complaints about the unpredictability of the curriculum and their powerlessness to influence curricular decisions. These concerns finally came to a crisis stage in the Fall of 1975 in a three-day Campus Forum during which the college motto, "Omnia Extares" was in effect: we "let it all hang out". The outcome of this close self-examination by the full campus community was the establishment of three Disappearing Task Forces: C.O.G. III to review our college governance structures, a Short-Range Curriculum DTF to prepare the following year's program, and a Long Range Curriculum DTF to recommend major improvements in our procedures and directions.

#### THE LONG RANGE CURRICULUM

The results of six months of intensive study by a task force composed of faculty, students and staff was an extensive report which proposed the curricular structure still in use today. Fundamentally, the report was a reaffirmation of faith in the importance of inter-disciplinary study, in our methods for delivering that type of study opportunity, in the central importance of helping students learn how to learn, and in the value of having students take charge of and plan their own curricular paths. In order to provide some logic to the curriculum for ourselves and our students, we devised the structure of "Interdisciplinary Specialty Areas" for advanced work, "Basic Programs " for the interdivisional general studies offerings and "Annual Programs" for the frankly experimental programs designed by either faculty or students.

To provide predictability and continuity, we agreed to plan the curriculum two years in advance and to repeat successful programs as needed by the students. This also reduced the faculty burn-out problem by cutting down somewhat on the need for continuous new program design. We did, however, require that a faculty member rotate among programs so that no one teaches more than two years in the repeated programs. "Basic Programs" were a continuation of our regular Coordinated Studies mode, but we required that all programs, regardless of title, must emphasize skill development in writing, reading, the discussion of ideas, and serious use of the library. Academic advising toward useful curriculum choice and effective use of Evergreen's study opportunities was to occur here. Successful Basic Programs were to be repeated each year, but with enough faculty turnover to keep them from going stale. "Annual Programs" were to remain a substantial part of the whole curriculum and would be the testing ground for new and innovative curricular ideas or for serving special but unusual needs of a group of students.

The advanced "Interdisciplinary Specialty Areas" were to provide a two year sequence of study which would take students well into upper division work on a repeatable and predictable basis. After one year of organizing experience, the titles of the Specialty Areas (as they still exist today) are: Environmental Studies, European and American Studies, Expressive Arts, Health and Human Development, Management and the Public Interest, Marine Sciences and Crafts, Northwest Native American Studies, Political Economy, and Scientific Knowledge and Inquiry. Each Specialty Area was to develop two-year sequences of offerings using our modes of study: Coordinated Studies,

Group Contracts, Individual Contracts, Internships and (if necessary) a limited number of modular courses. The only prerequisite for entering any of these Specialty Areas is completion of satisfactory work in any of the Basic Programs (or its equivalent).

To prevent these curricular units from becoming pseudo-departments, a number of precautions have been taken. First, these units have no budgetary base and no assigned faculty lines. Second, faculty are required to belong to at least two of these units for curriculum planning purposes and to teach in one unit for no more than three years in a row. Third, Convenors (rather than Chairmen) are selected by the Academic Deans for a two year period and given responsibility to call meetings, see to the completion of the curricular planning before catalog deadline, and advise the Deans on the needs of the Specialty Area. Finally, students are not required to stay within a single Specialty Area but can assemble their own majors from the entire curriculum if they prefer.

Under the leadership of the Provost and the Deans, several additional elements beyond the DTF recommendations were added during 1976-1977.

The part-time studies program was greatly expanded by the addition of Adjunct Faculty hired solely for the purpose of teaching modular courses in subject areas which the regular faculty could not cover for one reason or another.

In addition, our regular faculty planned and operated several half-time Coordinated Studies programs for working adults and for women re-entering college to complete long-delayed degrees. Further, we perfected an External Credit Program for the validation and crediting of experiential learning.

A major expansion was the opening of a satellite campus and a two-year, upper division coordinated studies sequence in Vancouver, Washington. This allowed persons holding the AA degree or its equivalent to complete a BA degree in two years plus one or two summers. For the first time, we began to take seriously our responsibilities to provide educational services specifically to Southwest Washington. And we learned from these efforts that our instructional format was particularly well suited to adult learners.

This attention to Southwest Washington and to adult learners came none too soon. Academic Year 1976-1977 saw the peak enrollment of 2530 headcount, 2399 FTE students and then the enrollment began to drop. In the Spring of that same year, the State Legislature asked the state coordinating body for higher education, the Council for Postsecondary Education (CPE), to do an extensive study and make recommendations on the curriculum and costs of The Evergreen State College. The study shall determine the actions needed to broaden the institution's clientele base by introducing traditional undergraduate and graduate course offerings and reduce the institution's total operating cost per FTE student to the average cost per FTE student of the other three state colleges (now regional universities).<sup>2</sup>

Paranthetically, every year since 1970 there had been at least one bill introduced into the Legislative hopper to close Evergreen, turn it into state offices, or a police academy, or at least a southern branch of the University of Washington. This time we were very concerned that the proposed study, with its desired outcome contained in the charge, would simply result in our becoming Southwest Washington State College for sure!

2 Council for Postsecondary Education, "The Evergreen Study" State of Washington, Olympia, Wa. February, 1979, p. 3



The ensuing study was very thorough, included interviews and surveys of current and prospective students, alumni and their employers, faculty and staff and was done with the full cooperation of the college. The outcome was a constructively critical analysis and overall confirmation of the validity of our educational efforts, based upon the support and success of our 3000 alumni, the strong affirmative attitudes of our students and the quality and seriousness of our faculty. Twenty recommendations accompanied the report, many of which had been discussed earlier on campus, which would make Evergreen more attractive to a wider audience of students, particularly from the State of Washington and our own southwest region of the state. The major recommendation was one of growth: from the 2200 FTE of 1977-1978 to about 4000 FTE by 1985. The 1979 Legislature committed itself to this plan and the fiscal support necessary to accomplish it. Among the recommendations was authorization to begin Masters Degree work, to provide more and better educational service to state government and state employees, to provide a wider variety of career options in the curriculum, and to recruit much more effectively in the high schools and community colleges of our region of the state.

Just as the CPE study was beginning, the college acquired a new president who was an expert in public affairs. Charles McCann, the founding president, decided to return to faculty life and was given a study leave to prepare for the task of teaching at Evergreen. The new president was Daniel J. Evans, retiring as Governor of the State after twelve years, in whose office in 1967 the organizational meeting of the Board of Trustees had been held!! With characteristic vigor, President Evans set out to fulfill the demands placed upon us by the study, while still retaining those philosophical and structural features of the college which the study itself had proven to be successful.

## CURRENT STATUS

Although there is some inevitable disagreement about the current state of the college and its curriculum, I will state for my part that we are still surprisingly faithful and true to our original ideals. We remain a bastion of interdisciplinary studies among U.S. colleges. We place a heavy emphasis on writing, reading and the discussion of ideas through the seminar experience. We ask students and faculty to devote almost full attention to one study at a time, though that study is enriched by the multifacets of the interdisciplinary approach to learning.

Because we reserve large blocks of time for such close work between students and faculty, we can write meaningful narrative evaluations (each for the other) instead of using the more trivial grading format. Because there are no set majors and no departmental requirements, students can set their own directions and create their own majors with whatever faculty advice they wish to seek. Through the Individual Contract mode, a student can dig deeply into a personally selected subject or activity. Through the Internship Program, a student can test a potential career and come away with the experience and the recommendations equivalent to a first job in that field. These are very close to our founding principles.

As is evident from these descriptions, we at Evergreen have not invented anything new. In that sense, we have not really ever been "experimental". We have simply taken a number of earlier experiments, some of them really quite old, and assembled them into a working system which is bound together with the rationale provided above.

We were all quite disappointed when Grant and Riesman's book, *THE PERPETUAL DREAM*, treated Evergreen only as a set of footnotes. Yet, they are correct in the assessment that Evergreen did not undertake a "telic reform". Instead, we were the beneficiaries of a number of such reforms. I am inclined to believe that it is the diversity of those reforms, which we have collected together and rationalized, that gives us our durability and attractiveness.

Given all of this preamble, where then is the argument or concern over the current status of the college? Some faculty feel that we have become too career oriented, that we have lost our innovative spirit, that we no longer are committed to experimentation. It is indeed true that we have neglected our Annual Programs in the effort to launch the Specialty Areas, but we have noticed this and are taking steps to correct it. Many feel that we are slipping ever closer to departmentalism, although our protective structures are still intact. Others feel that we have sold out to the public relations demands of the legislature and our continuing critics.

What are the actions we have taken in response to the CPE recommendations which generate these fears? We have defined more clearly for students a set of career pathways through our curriculum, and a large part of that curriculum continues to be quite predictable. Within that curriculum, we have defined and now offer a B.S. as well as a B.A. degree. We have improved the level and quality of student advising substantially. We have contracted with a nearby private college to provide teacher certification courses on our campus for our students at state tuition rates. We have opened our first masters level program, a Masters in Public Administration, with an emphasis on state and local government. We have taken our first

cautious steps into inter-collegiate athletics through soccer, swimming, cross-country, tennis and sailing. The result has been that we are beginning to attract a more diverse and local group of students. Perhaps fortunately, the current economic problems of the state have slowed the pressure for the mandated rapid growth, giving us an opportunity to assimilate our new activities and student clienteles and to consider their effects on the quality of our educational efforts.

Before discussing the current problems and the future directions we, as a college, may wish to consider, it would be well to digress with a discussion of the administrative patterns we have developed to handle the affairs of our academic structure.

#### COLLEGE GOVERNANCE WITHOUT DEPARTMENTS, RANK OR TENURE

The development of Evergreen's system of college governance is an interesting story of its own, which has been told by President McCann.<sup>3</sup> Here, therefore, I will simply describe and critique our present scheme, reciting only enough history to provide a working rationale.

#### Decision Making

During the planning year, it was established by the first Committee on Governance that decisions would be made by administrators, commensurate with the responsibilities they had to carry as part of a state-supported system of higher education. A decision should be made at the level closest to those who will be affected, by an administrator who will be "locatable and accountable", only after advice and counsel has been sought through the mechanism of a fairly selected and representative "Disappearing Task Force".

3 "Alternatives to the Academic Department", Chapter 8, ed. Dean McHenry, Jossey-Bass (San Francisco, 1977)

The problem-oriented and short-lived DTF was preferred over the more typical standing committee which often takes on a life and an inertia of its own. This became our form of participatory governance in the wake of the sixties experience. This general framework for decision making is still dominant today, although a few standing committees do now exist for those areas of decision-making that require consistency and continuity from year to year: Professional Leaves, Professional Travel, Faculty Hiring, Protection of the Visual Environment and of the Natural Environment on campus. The overall watchdog committee, variously called "The Sounding Board" or "The Evergreen Council", is still composed of five faculty, five staff, five administrators and fifteen students. Its principal functions are the debate of issues and the exchange of ideas, not the setting of policy. It reviews the appointment of all DTF's and receives copies of their reports for public information purposes.

Only since the Fall of 1978 has the faculty held regular monthly meetings. This move in the direction of tradition was necessitated by an increasing feeling of powerlessness on the part of the faculty, whether true or fancied was immaterial. Academic policy was established as the domain appropriate for faculty meeting action. Through this vehicle decisions were made on: implementation of the recommendations of the CPE study, whether or not to establish institution-wide requirements for graduation beyond the simple accumulation of credit (decided negatively), whether or not to change from a quarter to a semester system (negatively), the review and improvement of various special academic options (internships, credit for prior learning, upside down degree), etc.

Academic Administration

Within the "locatable and accountable" framework and with no department chairmen or their equivalents, virtually all of the responsibility for academic administration falls upon four Academic Deans (and the Provost, serving somewhat the role of Dean of Deans). Two of the four are Senior Deans appointed for four-year, twice renewable terms following a nationwide search. The other two are Assistant Deans selected from the faculty for a two-year, non-renewable appointment and then rotated back into the faculty. The four deans share equally in the department chair-type functions. Each has responsibility for annual performance evaluation, teaching improvement and curricular advising for a group of about thirty faculty members. These groups also meet on a biweekly basis to discuss academic affairs and advise the deans on upcoming administrative matters.

The remaining academic administrative duties are divided according to "Desk Functions" (as in State Department parlance). The two Senior Deans carry those desk functions which require special expertise and continuity of process: academic budget, space allocation, academic staff supervision, curriculum development, faculty hiring. The Assistant Deans assist the Senior Deans in some of those major functions, carry those desks requiring less continuity, and develop the expertise which may later make them successful Senior Dean candidates. At least as importantly, the Assistant Deans also bring faculty viewpoints and direct curriculum experience into the deans' decision making circle.



### The Non Tenure System

Evergreen's alternative to the traditional tenure system operates today almost unchanged from that presented by the planning faculty to the Board of Trustees in the spring of 1971. The system includes:

1. Three year contracts of appointment for all faculty, regardless of seniority.
2. A serious annual evaluation of the work of each faculty member by an Academic Dean, based upon a cumulative portfolio maintained by each faculty member and containing all previous evaluations by colleagues, students and previous academic deans, evaluations of colleagues, students and academic deans, and samples of the academic activities carried out in recent years.
3. An appeals process designed to be as neutral and fair to all parties as possible (each party in the grievance selects two representatives, those four select a fifth member, a due-process hearing is conducted and a decision rendered). In order to protect academic freedom, the real intent of the tenure system in the first place, we required of the Board of Trustees that the decision of the appeals process be final and not subject to overrule by their subsequent decision.<sup>4</sup>

During the second year of each three-year contract, the critical decision is made as to whether a new contract will be offered at the conclusion of the third year. If not, and provided clear warnings have been given the previous year, two options remain: either the third year of the current contract will be a terminal year, or a one-year reappraisal extension of the current contract can be given. During the extension year, very explicit directives for improvement must be accomplished (with proffered collegial assistance) or the fourth year will be terminal.

4 see TESC faculty handbook for further details.

It is perhaps evident that the fundamental purpose of such a system is faculty development and the improvement of teaching by all of the faculty, no matter how senior. In spite of our idealistic intentions, it is inevitable that the final test of the process will be its ability to divest the institution of its unsuccessful teachers. On this score, the record is fair and improving. In the seven years during which terminations would have been possible (the first three-year appointments were awarded in the Fall of 1971), and not counting the simply voluntary resignations, 14 faculty have been either required to leave or have resigned after deciding that they could not fulfill the explicit improvements required of them.

To show the even-handed application of the policy, 2 of that number were on the planning faculty and another 4 had served on the faculty for at least 6 years. In only one case has the full appeals board apparatus been called into effect, and that decision came down on the side of the institution. The real test of our system, of course, will be the case which is decided in favor of the terminated faculty member.

#### Academic Rank

At the outset of our curricular planning in 1970, it became clear that academic rank would be a serious impediment to the team teaching methods of Coordinated Studies. Members of a team could best work as co-equals so that the subject area expertise could pass from one member of the team to another as required by the study plan rather than by some seniority system. Often the designer and coordinator of a Study Program, who should therefore have temporary leadership authority, was a younger faculty member. And in teaching a Coordinated Study Program, all faculty learn from one another independent of seniority.

Thus, all faculty at Evergreen simply carry the title, "Member of the Faculty" ( ) with the parenthesis filled by the person's principal field of expertise.

Faculty advance annually along a graduated salary scale, provided that their annual evaluations are satisfactory and they are making normal progress toward re-appointment. The salary scale favors the younger faculty by providing them a larger dollar increase per step than the more experienced faculty. After twenty-nine years of experience, the salary scale plateaus at twice the normal starting level.

### Critique

The decision-making process works quite well when we are making positive and forward-looking decisions. Students, faculty and staff have given innumerable hours each year to the DTF process and the great majority of the recommendations so generated have become college policy, either directly or with minor changes. In spite of efforts to distribute the assignments, the workload of active participation seems to fall unevenly on certain persons among faculty and staff. We are reaching the limits of volunteerism and need to find a way to reward exceptional service in this, among other extra duties we ask of faculty and staff. The extremely egalitarian rank and salary system we have devised leaves little or no room to say "welldone" in any substantive fashion. Some system of merit pay for outstanding service needs to be developed.

The decision making process does not work nearly so well in times of retrenchment. We have not had to face this problem very often, fortunately, but on the two occasions when cut-backs have been necessary (1973 and 1980) the results have not been encouraging. First, in order to avoid panic and

endless debate at such times (which often demand very prompt action), administrators are reluctant to invoke the public mode of decision making which the DTF requires. Second, because the public mode is not invoked, all parties not consulted feel betrayed and state that the decisions are arbitrary and capricious. In this upcoming period of fiscal stringency, we need to find a more satisfactory solution to this governance problem.

Our system of academic governance without departments, through the Academic Deans, is working quite well. Last year, in its fifth year of operation in current form, the scheme was reviewed and reaffirmed by all parties directly concerned. The principal unresolved problem is the extreme workload which the Deans must carry, increasing steadily with faculty size and the burden of the annual evaluation of faculty.

We are feeling increasingly confident of our alternative to tenure in its present form. It is no longer subject to the early criticism that it was a system of "instant tenure" as we gain experience and some history of termination of unsuccessful faculty members. However, the system does have a troubling fragility in that it is entirely dependent upon the frank and honest appraisal of teaching quality by faculty colleagues and students. Perhaps any system which truly values and tries to appraise teaching quality is subject to this same fragility and criticism.

## THE PROCESS OF MATURING

John Gardner has written, "Like people and plants, organizations have a life cycle. They have a green and supple youth, a time of flourishing strength, and a gnarled old age." <sup>5</sup> So starts an analysis by Lippitt and Schmidt, entitled "Crises in a Developing Organization". <sup>6</sup> The stages of organizational development proposed by them and displayed in Table I seem to provide a framework which will be helpful in analyzing where we have been as a developing college and what problems we must look forward to solving in the near future.

I have tried to indicate in the fourth column the various stages of Evergreen's developmental history which seem to fit the categories of Lippitt and Schmidt. These assignments are admittedly subjective but, if correct, then it would appear that we are approaching maturity (Step 5) and our next critical concern is to achieve adaptability along with uniqueness, to decide whether and how much to change to achieve this adaptability, to decide how to make full use of our (college's) unique abilities." <sup>7</sup> "Certain reactionary forces within (will) feel that there is more to be lost than was the case in creating the original organism."<sup>8</sup> "But such conservatism and a desire to avoid uncertainty lead to various kinds of harmful inhibitions.....Thus research and development - sometimes diversification are introduced in the hope of establishing relative security in an uncertain future." <sup>9</sup>

5 "How to Prevent Organizational Dry Rot", Harpers Magazine, Oct. 1965, p. 30

6 Harvard Business Review, Nov.-Dec. 1967, pp. 102-112

7 Ibid pg. 103

8 Ibid pg. 108

9 Ibid pg. 109

Table I

STAGES OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

<u>Developmental Stage</u>	<u>Critical Concern</u>	<u>Key Issues</u>	<u>Stages in TESC Development</u>
Birth	To create a new organization	What to risk	1967-1972 Founding, Planning, Opening the first year of operation
	To survive as a viable system	What to sacrifice	1972-1976 Early Curriculum Planning and Governance evolution Defining the experiment Achieving the 5-year accreditation
	To gain stability	How to organize	1976-1978 Long Range Curriculum COG III Changing the top administration
Youth	To gain reputation and develop pride	How to review and evaluate	1978-1981 CPE Study Consolidate and strengthen curriculum Improve public relations and image ("Tell the Evergreen Story") Achieve 10-year accreditation
	To achieve uniqueness and adaptability	Whether and how to change	1981-? How can we retain our uniqueness yet diversify and remain relevant to our times?
Maturity	To contribute to society	Whether and how to share	?????????



## PROBLEMS IN SEARCH OF SOLUTIONS

There are at least four major problem areas facing Evergreen which must be addressed in order to ensure a stable maturity during its second decade.

These can be characterized as:

- (1) Growth and diversification
- (2) Student retention
- (3) Faculty and staff morale
- and (4) Professional development opportunities

In many ways, these are the problems facing all of higher education today; but with Evergreen's unique structure and mission, the problems may demand unique solutions. We will be called upon for continuing invention, flexibility and adaptation; our problems will not be solved by conservatism, rigidity or by clinging to past methods and experiences.

Growth and Diversification

Legislative pressures to achieve economies of scale will continue to force us to increase enrollment from the current 2400 toward 3500-4000 FTE students. (At that level, it is predicted that our average cost per student will be similar to that of our sister institutions). With our current curriculum and methods, we seem to have a fairly natural niche on the national educational scene for some 2200-2500 students. Many of these are transfers who were dissatisfied elsewhere and wish to try our particular educational alternative. Others are older students returning to college after some years of absence. We have been slow in attracting younger students who come to Evergreen simply because of the success of our academic program and our graduates. We are particularly slow in attracting students from our own state and region.

The current conservative climate and economic pressures have made students very career oriented and less interested in the liberal arts. But our particular mix of the liberal with the practical arts, of education with training, should be attractive and marketable in this climate if we can tell our story clearly and simply. We must fully develop career opportunities while preserving the values of interdisciplinary education and the liberal arts. We must prepare students in many of the conventional fields of study, but in an educational setting which builds social obligation and responsibility. We must attract a more diverse student population in terms of career interests, age, race and life styles. We must attract more freshmen and become less dependent on transfer students.

Although the concepts of flexibility and curricular responsiveness to student needs were strong in the early conception and rhetoric of Evergreen, there is a noticeable tendency today to conserve and preserve what we have developed. There is a reluctance to move with the times, even within our philosophical framework, to meet the new needs of professionalism and career orientation. A new Long-Range Curriculum DTF will begin meeting this Autumn to address these issues and to seek creative, Evergreen-style solutions.

#### Student Retention

Our record in student retention has not been particularly enviable, though perhaps not unlike that of other liberal arts colleges which place serious intellectual demands on their students. We have no sororities or fraternities, few social clubs and only a minimal intercollegiate athletic program, so the academic work is the principal activity on campus. Combined with the gray weather of our long winters, campus morale takes a noticeable slump every Winter Quarter, and Spring Quarter enrollment suffers significantly.

We have exerted considerable effort this past spring in data collection on the attrition/retention issues and will make this problem a major target of our creativity during the next academic year.

#### Faculty and Staff Morale

Since the earliest days of the college, we have placed unusual demands on the time and energy of our faculty and staff. To a considerable extent, the structure of our academic system will continue to require heavy contact hours of the faculty (19 per week is average) and much paperwork of the staff (narrative evaluations, annual catalog preparation, etc.). Added to this is the uncertainty caused by annual threats of closure, budget cuts by the state, and accompanying small reductions in staff by attrition or layoff. Anxieties and tensions can rise rather high at times, and have recently led to formation of our first collective bargaining unit (classified staff, primarily). We have about reached the end of volunteerism by both staff and faculty alike. Another DTF, to be formed in the Autumn, will be charged with the task of devising a system of faculty merit-pay-for-special-service, and perhaps of providing other recommendations for improvement of general morale on campus.

#### Professional Development

One of the most serious problems for a driven and hardworking staff and faculty, particularly in a teaching-centered institution, is maintaining contact with a profession and its advancement. Traditionally, a sabbatical program allows the faculty and certain staff to engage in professional study and updating, at least once every seventh year.

In the state of Washington, the Professional Leaves Program limits participation to only 4% of the faculty and professional staff per year--- that is, about once every 20-25 years for each person! We are trying to supplement this austere program by developing faculty exchange opportunities with other colleges and universities in this country and abroad.

Several unique opportunities for faculty development exist at Evergreen because of our structure and policies. The faculty seminar is one of the most satisfactory devices for developing the interdisciplinary capabilities of the faculty. Shifting the teaching responsibilities within the curriculum every couple of years adds to the development of breadth. Organizing and teaching an advanced Group Contract in one's own field can provide the opportunity for an in-depth updating of one's expertise.

To share teaching techniques and methods of solving pedagogic problems, we hold a monthly all-faculty Teaching Strategies Session, organized around some special theme each time. Each Spring Quarter, we release one of our successful faculty from regular teaching duties to serve as consultant to any faculty colleagues who wish help in improving their teaching skills.

Certain members of the staff holding faculty rank (especially from the Library and the Computer Center) are rotated into the ranks of the teaching faculty for a quarter or two every three years. In exchange, a member of the teaching faculty rotates into the staff position to carry forward certain developmental tasks. For both parties, always volunteer, this provides breadth, new insight, and a break from the usual pressure and routine.

Although we have clearly given considerable attention to professional development, we continue to see it as a problem needing additional solutions. In our teaching

context, the problem of staying current in one's own field of expertise is unusually large and particularly difficult to solve. Grant funds to support faculty research are increasingly difficult to obtain, and our curricular structure makes it difficult to provide a reduced teaching load in order to encourage part-time research. We hope to share our problems and seek solutions through continuing conversations with our sister liberal arts colleges.

### Conclusions

Our ability to respond creatively to these problems, and other only partially predictable challenges arising from the economic and demographic conditions of the times, will determine our future viability as an innovative institution of the 1980's. Continuing modification of curriculum and style may be necessary to serve the needs of a new generation of students and a new set of societal attitudes and problems. A continuing review of our fundamental educational principles may even be required to assure that we are serving those needs well.

The dangers, of course, are two-fold: Either we are so set in our ways that we cannot change at all, or we change so dramatically that we lose our sense of mission and become quite traditional. Either extreme would be disastrous.

My own prediction is that the educational pendulum, while now swinging strongly toward the conservative side, will begin its return motion before this decade is ended. As an institution, we are currently being forced to move in a conservative direction in order to survive; but, as the pendulum begins to return, we will be ahead of the motion and can again give leadership to the creative impulse in the higher education community. Thus, the experiment is by no means ended. The demands for flexibility and invention will be every bit as great in the decade ahead as in that just past.