the evergreen state college

OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

Spring 2020 Ad Hoc Report

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Contents

Introduction

This Ad Hoc Report is being submitted to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) as requested. We are responding to the reaccreditation letter dated January 18, 2019, sent after our Fall 2018 Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Evaluation visit. This letter included four recommendations in areas where we were substantially in compliance but in need of improvement. We appreciate the insight of our peers as we seek to better serve our students and the state of Washington.

Recommendation One

Better align Core Theme indicators and measurement tools to achieve more meaningful results that lead to improvement due to the fact that some objectives lack direct measures for the assessment of Core Themes (Standard 4.A.6).

4.A.6 *The institution regularly reviews its assessment processes to ensure they appraise authentic achievements and yield meaningful results that lead to improvement.*

Relevant 2020 Standards
- ***1.C.5*** *The institution engages in an effective system of assessment to evaluate the quality of learning in its programs. The institution recognizes the central role of faculty to establish curricula, assess student learning, and improve instructional programs.*

- ***1.C.6*** *Consistent with its mission, the institution establishes and assesses, across all associate and bachelor level programs or within a General Education curriculum, institutional learning outcomes and/or core competencies. Examples of such learning outcomes and competencies include, but are not limited to, effective communication skills, global awareness, cultural sensitivity, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis and logical thinking, problem solving, and/or information literacy.*

- ***1.C.7*** *The institution uses the results of its assessment efforts to inform academic and learning-support planning and practices to continuously improve student learning outcomes.*

Background

Evergreen's method of assessing student learning expresses the value we place on a developmental approach through which faculty provide students with formative feedback and students reflect on that feedback and their own learning. This assessment process is documented in the narrative evaluations that comprise each students' Evergreen transcript, as well as in the Transcript Review. In short, Evergreen values alternatives to normative standards for measuring student learning outcomes and student growth.

While we remain committed to the power of narrative evaluations to shape and reflect strong student learning outcomes, we are also committed to improving our evaluation processes. Recommendation One in the Year Seven Peer Evaluation Report has led us to develop a plan for directly assessing our College-wide student learning outcomes as well as the student learning outcomes being defined within each of our new Paths of Study. The multifaceted assessment plan described below enables regular review of assessment processes, annual tracking of student

learning through high-fidelity direct measures, and verification that the results are equitable for all Evergreen students.

Specifically, Evergreen has begun to initiate a continuous quality improvement framework for student learning that (1) operationalizes the [Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate](#) as College-wide student learning outcomes; (2) establishes protocols to engage faculty in an annual direct assessment of student work across the curriculum; and (3) institutes improvements to the longstanding transcript review process to provide actionable evidence of student learning. This project was drafted at the 2019 Washington Center Summer Institute for Improving Undergraduate Education, where a team of twelve faculty, staff and administrators collaborated for four days under the able tutelage of national experts in student learning and assessment, including Pat Hutchings and Jillian Kinzie.

(1) Operationalizing the Six Expectations

The Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate, adopted in 2001 after an affirmative faculty vote, provide a framework for articulating the knowledge, skills, and abilities students will obtain through Evergreen's unique self-directed curriculum. To date, the Six Expectations have served as a guide for faculty and students to understand the scope of a liberal arts curriculum. We are now moving to understand the Six Expectations as measurable learning outcomes. Below we outline an approach that operationalizes measurement of the "Six Expectations of an Evergreen Graduate" and leverages Evergreen's established protocols for transcript review in order to do so.

EVERGREEN'S PROMISE

THE SIX EXPECTATIONS OF AN EVERGREEN GRADUATE

As a culmination of your education you will …
demonstrate depth, breadth and synthesis of learning *and* the ability to reflect on the personal and social significance of that learning.

Along the way you will …

- **articulate and assume responsibility** for your own work.
- **participate** collaboratively and responsibly **in our diverse society**.
- **communicate** creatively and effectively.
- **demonstrate** integrative, independent, **critical thinking**.
- **apply** qualitative, quantitative and creative **modes of inquiry** appropriately to practical and theoretical problems across disciplines.

(2) Establishing a Protocol for Direct Assessment of Student Learning

The protocol we have developed adopts a standardized process for using direct measures to assess student progress towards College-wide student learning outcomes—in this case, the Six Expectations. The protocol is designed to achieve three important goals:

1) Establish an institutional culture of assessment by assessing the authentic achievements of students using direct measures;
2) Enhance our institutional capacity to engage in faculty-driven annual assessments of student work; and
3) Collect evidence of progress towards the Six Expectations directly from student work.

Implementation of the protocol will occur through a three-phase process:

Phase 1: Mapping Student Learning to the Six Expectations

At the end of each quarter, teaching faculty report on their learning activities through an "End of Program Review (EPR) Survey". An adaptation of the EPR survey will add the following components:

Curriculum Map: Faculty will map their learning goals and activities to the Six Expectations by specifically describing how the program/course addresses one or more the Six Expectations.

Submission of Student Work: To support ongoing validation of the protocol, faculty will submit samples of student work for review in Phase 2.

Timeline: We will launch the revised End of Program Review survey at the end of spring quarter 2020.

Phase 2: Developing Institutional Capacity for Student Learning Assessment

In the 2018 Year Seven Peer Evaluation Report, the accreditation team observed the following about the transcript review: "Although faculty members are provided an Expectations Coding Key, such assessment practices introduce the elements of human variability and error both in terms of writing and reading. As Evergreen academic assessment relies heavily on the transcript review, it will be critical for the institution to maintain robust investment in the selection, training, and support of reviewers. The Expectations Coding Key should also be evaluated regularly to ensure it reflects the objectives it is intended to measure. It may also be beneficial to offer all faculty members some training on the transcript review to assist them in providing the most useful narrative evaluations possible."

Phase two of protocol development directly addresses this critique by adopting an annual process for engaging the faculty in direct measurement of student work. We will develop a new "Six Expectations Evaluation Rubric" modeled after the Expectations Coding Key, and select faculty will participate each summer in a calibration and scoring training with this rubric immediately prior to scoring samples of student work. The potential for human variability and error will be reduced through use of the rubric, robust training and engagement in an annual review process.

Timeline: We will launch this work during summer 2020 at a Six Expectations Summer Institute.

Phase 3: Expanding the Direct Assessment Protocol to Paths of Study

Following completion and evaluation of Phases 1 and 2, Academic Deans and Curriculum Area Team Leaders will assess the student learning outcomes that faculty have defined for each Path of Study to guide student progress from foundational to capstone learning in a self-directed curriculum.

Timeline: We will launch this work during summer 2021 at a Paths of Study Summer Institute.

(3) Continuous Improvement of the Transcript Review Protocol

Every four years since 2002, a review of students' narrative transcripts has provided the College with critical insight into student learning and development. As the Year Seven Peer Evaluation Report noted, Evergreen has over-relied on the transcript review as a means to assess student learning, particularly given concerns about introducing human variability and error in the analysis. The following improvements to the process improve the fidelity of the evaluation without sacrificing the benefit of analyzing a student's narrative transcript as evidence of learning.

Improve Evaluation Tool: Using lessons learned through the development of the "Six Expectations Evaluation Rubric" (see above), the Expectations Coding Key will be updated to better reflect the gradient of student learning from developmental to capstone work as expressed in the student's narrative transcript.

Improve Sampling: We will move to a transcript review every two years and implement more robust collection techniques to ensure a demographically representative sample. These changes will bolster our ability to act upon the evidence collected to improve learning for all students, particularly those currently underserved.

Improve Scoring Protocols: The protocols currently in development for evaluating student work will be consistently applied to the transcript review to improve inter-rater reliability through calibration and improved training on applying the coding key.

Timeline: We will launch this work during summer 2020 at a Six Expectations Summer Institute.

In summary, the implementation of a continuous quality improvement framework for assessing student learning is nested in the development of an institutional process that makes meaning from students' authentic achievements and that yields useful data for multiple audiences. We need to develop a process for using these data to improve student learning and student achievement. Such a process could involve asking the Office of Institutional Research to prepare data summaries that provide student achievement data (retention and graduation rates, etc.) and student learning data (transcript review, the six expectations data from Phase I and II) that is disaggregated by demographics and curricular areas. These data summaries would be distributed to faculty groups for review, discussion, and action planning. Each faculty group would convene in the summer to review the data, identify the key metrics they will address, and prepare a plan for improving student outcomes by identifying 3-5 actions. Each group would provide a report on the progress of their interventions in the following summer where they would create an update to that plan and repeat the cycle. This process, while ambitious in the context of our current institutional culture of assessment, will support continuous improvement.

Recommendation Two

Address recommendations from previous work done in planning for Core Theme 4 to better achieve Core Theme 4 objectives (Standard 3.B.2).

3.B.2 *Planning for programs and services for diversity and equity guides contributing components and ensures alignment and contribution to achievement of outcomes.*

Relevant 2020 Standards
- **Standard One—Student Success and Institutional Mission and Effectiveness**: *The institution articulates its commitment to student success, primarily measured through student learning and achievement for all students, with a focus on equity and closure of achievement gaps, and establishes a mission statement, acceptable thresholds, and benchmarks for effectiveness with meaningful indicators…Programs are systematically assessed using meaningful indicators to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and achieved stated learning outcomes for all students, including underrepresented students and first-generation college students.*

In the context of NWCCU's revisions to the accreditation standards and the accreditation process, including a move away from Core Themes, Standard One provides a framework for Evergreen to move forward on Recommendation Two from the Year Seven Peer Evaluation Report. The report states, "While the College is able to cite numerous efforts to demonstrate its efforts to enhance diversity and equity, the institution still has much work to do in this arena." Specifically, Recommendation 2 states: "The Evaluation Committee recommends that planning for [Diversity and Equity] should address recommendations from previous work done in this area in order to better achieve [Diversity and Equity] objectives (Standard 3.B.2)."

Background

Evergreen's mission articulates our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion:

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

In service to our mission, Evergreen has a history of valuing and investing in diversity, equity and inclusion at the College. This includes establishing First Peoples Multicultural, Trans and Queer Support Services, TRiO programs, the Tacoma Program, the Longhouse, the MPA Tribal Governance program, the Native Pathways Program, Evening and Weekend Studies, the recruitment of diverse students, staff and faculty, and the Day of Absence/Day of Presence recently replaced by the College's annual Equity Symposium.

In 2016, Evergreen formed the Equity Council, an inter-divisional group of faculty, staff, and administrators, and charged the Council with creating a strategic plan to achieve equity goals at the College. The stated goal was "to substantially improve the experience of underserved students on our campus so that we close equity gaps in student learning and student success." The Council studied data on equity gaps in retention, student confidence and satisfaction, and access to high impact practices for students of color and low income-students. In addition, the Council highlighted

the demands of vulnerable student groups: Trans students demanding a safer campus through mandatory training, gender neutral bathrooms, and paid staff support positions; and Black student group demands, which mirror those named nationally: increased diversity of professors, required diversity training, funding of cultural centers, required classes for students, and increased emphasis on recruiting and supporting a diverse student body.

The Council developed the following recommendations: (1) Hire a VP for Equity and Inclusion and develop a new institutional structure to support that work; (2) Engage the campus in ongoing dialogue around equity through community forums; (3) Coordinate ongoing faculty development to refine teaching practices and; (4) Advance equity goals in faculty hiring. Implementation of these recommendations was disrupted in spring 2017. Student protests at Evergreen amplified the call to move more quickly towards racial equity and social justice, and resonated with the impatience expressed on college campuses across the nation. Some Evergreen community members indicated a desire to slow down in order to engage in further discussion. Since that time, the College has resumed the work and revised some of its equity goals to extend Evergreen's student success commitment to students of every background, identity, and ability.

Current Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives

In order to align Evergreen's diversity, equity and inclusion goals with Standard One, we are focused on linking equity with student success, student learning and campus-wide belonging through four initiatives: (1) creating an Inclusive Excellence and Student Success division; (2) offering professional development opportunities on equitable teaching and learning; (3) administering and acting on the College's first Campus Climate Survey; and (4) developing divisional Equity Action Plans.

(1) Creating an Inclusive Excellence and Student Success Division
In order to implement a coordinated and effective campus-wide equity strategy, a VP for Equity and Inclusion will be hired who will oversee the development of a new division of equity and inclusion.

After the hire of Evergreen's first Vice President of Equity and Inclusion in spring 2017, the College engaged in a reorganization process starting in summer 2018 to create the Division of Inclusive Excellence and Student Success (IESS). Given that over 80% of our graduating students identify with one or more underserved groups, understanding the assets and experiences each student brings to Evergreen is critical to providing the types of guidance, support and instruction that empower each student to succeed. The IESS Division was created to provide this leadership, modeling guidance and support while utilizing an equity lens in fostering effective and inclusive educational practices for our students. IESS aims to re-imagine the success of all students by providing support through their challenges, breaking institutional barriers, and emphasizing the assets they bring and the growth they can experience at Evergreen.

The IESS Division currently includes the following areas of the College:
• Academic and Career Advising
• Access Services for Students with Disabilities
• First Peoples Multicultural, Queer and Trans Support Services
• New Student Programs
• TRiO and Upward Bound Programs

The original Strategic Equity Plan included other areas as "direct lines of communication and/or dotted-line reporting" to the Vice President of Equity and Inclusion, including: Veteran's Services, Affirmative Action/EOO, Title IX, Learning and Teaching Commons, Human Resources, and Faculty Hiring. While these areas ended up or remained in other divisions, IESS works with them to promote inclusive excellence and student success across the College.

(2) Offering Professional Development Opportunities on Equitable Teaching and Learning
With equity mindsets, we teach, engage, and lead with cultural competence and cultural humility.

In May 2016, the Evergreen faculty made a collective commitment to engage in professional development about equity, to integrate that learning into teaching practices, and to address this work in their annual self-evaluations. In the wake of spring 2017, an MOU was signed with the United Faculty of Evergreen requiring all faculty to participate in professional development opportunities around the learning needs and assets of our diverse students. We have also formed the Learning & Teaching Commons inside our nationally-recognized Washington Center for Improving Undergraduate Education:

Evergreen's Learning & Teaching Commons promotes a generative culture of interdisciplinary teaching and learning that is student-centered, equity-minded, inquiry-oriented, and committed to access and excellence. We aim to promote better classroom experiences that lead to increased student learning and retention. The Commons is conceived as an institutional space where faculty can cultivate practices and develop tools that will give all students the chance to excel and to meet the Six Expectations of an Evergreen graduate.

A new director for the Washington Center and the Learning & Teaching Commons was hired through a competitive national search and assumed the position in June 2019. The successful candidate is a nationally-networked leader in professional development, as well as a chemistry faculty member and an Evergreen alumnae. The launch of the Learning & Teaching Commons under the new director's stewardship has substantially increased our capacity to offer professional development for faculty and staff with a particular focus on building institutional capacity to serve and support all students. The director collaborates with the Dean of Faculty Hiring and Development, a Faculty Fellow, and a faculty and staff advisory group to create regular programming such as Commons Conversations, guest speakers, communities of practice, and drop-in office hours. They also collaborate with the IESS Vice President to offer summer institutes for faculty and staff on equity-focused topics such as "Inclusive Excellence: Leading for Racial Equity" and "Strength-Based Practices for Neurodivergent Student Success."

(3) Administering the College's First Campus Climate Survey
Our climate must cultivate a strong sense of belonging, embracing and affirming all through open-hearted engagement, cultural competence, and individual empowerment.

Under the direction of the IESS Vice President and with the leadership of Evergreen's Campus Climate and Culture Committee (CCCC), the Campus Climate Survey was designed and launched in January 2020 to collect data from students, faculty and staff on what it feels like to study, work, and teach at Evergreen. These data will help to identify the perspectives, attitudes and experiences of all members of the Evergreen community with respect to the topics of diversity, equity and inclusion.

The climate assessment will also collect qualitative data, primarily through focus groups to be conducted in spring 2020 with the assistance of focus group leaders from outside the Evergreen

community. In summer 2020, these data will be anonymized and a work group convened to analyze major themes that emerged in the focus group discussions. These themes will be combined with findings from the Climate Survey to inform recommendations for improving Evergreen's campus life and building on the diversity, equity and inclusion work we have underway.

(4) Developing Divisional Equity Action Plans
Inclusive excellence calls for a vital transformation of our institution by embedding and institutionalizing equitable and inclusive practices in every effort, aspect, and level of our College.

Beginning in summer 2019, a team of Inclusive Excellence and Student Success staff, led by the IESS Vice President, conducted workshops designed to educate the campus community about the Inclusive Excellence Framework. This team also provided support for the divisions (Finance and Operations, Student and Academic Life, Indigenous Arts and Education, Advancement, College Relations, and the President's Office) to develop Inclusive Excellence action plans. The action plans build on divisional self-assessments which utilized SOAR analysis to identify strengths, opportunities, aspirations and desired results in regards to equity.

The divisions are currently engaged in setting equity goals consistent with the College's mission, strategic priorities and the Inclusive Excellence Framework. Each division will identify actions, timelines, and target measures, as well as project leads and necessary resources. Plans will be written in three year increments, with quarterly and yearly progress reports providing opportunities for ongoing consultation and collaboration with IESS leadership.

We are in the early stages of building dashboards to more effectively display the rich data set collected and maintained by our Office of Institutional Research. This project will enable us to quickly access the disaggregated data that we need to inform our equity action plans.

NOTE THAT RECOMMENDATIONS THREE AND FOUR WILL BE ADDRESSED TOGETHER, AS THEY BOTH RELATE TO PLANNING

Recommendation Three
Develop a realistic multi-year enrollment management plan in support of financial resource planning due to the consistent decline in enrollment starting in 2010 (Standard 2.F.2).

2.F.2 *Resource planning and development include realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and responsible projections of grants, donations and other non-tuition revenue sources.*

Recommendation Four
Conduct institutional planning in a systematic and integrated manner, making use of comprehensive opportunities for input and communication among all constituents of the campus. Further, the Evaluation Committee recommends that when plans are implemented, they be made available and communicated to appropriate constituencies. (Standard 3.A.1, 3.A.2)

3.A.1 *The institution engages in ongoing, purposeful, systematic, integrated and comprehensive planning that leads to fulfillment of its mission. Its plans are implemented and made available to appropriate constituencies.*

3.A.2 *The institution's comprehensive planning process is broad-based and offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies.*

Relevant 2020 Standards

- **Standard Two—Governance, Resources and Capacity:** *The institution articulates its commitment to a structure of governance that is inclusive in its planning and decision-making. Through its planning, operational activities, and allocation of resources, the institution demonstrates a commitment to student learning and achievement in an environment respectful of meaningful discourse.*

- ***Eligibility Requirement 4, INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS:*** *The institution demonstrates and publishes evidence of effectiveness and uses ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to refine its key processes and measures to demonstrate institutional mission fulfillment. Through these processes, it regularly monitors its internal and external environments to determine how and to what degree changing circumstances may impact the institution and its ability to ensure its viability and sustainability.*

- ***Eligibility Requirement 23, INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY:*** *The institution demonstrates operational capacity (e.g. enrollment, human and financial resources, and institutional infrastructure) sufficient to fulfill and sustain its mission. It allocates resources as necessary to achieve its mission and engages in realistic budgeting, enrollment management, and capital planning to support the achievement of its identified strategic indicators of institutional capacity.*

Background

In its fall 2018 site visit and review, the Year Seven Accreditation Evaluation Committee reported that"[b]etween the original Strategic Plan, the Evergreen Renews effort, and the Core Theme planning for accreditation, there exists a confusing array of 'plans' at the College." Confusion among campus community members interviewed by Committee members heightened this concern. The Commission's Recommendation 3 directs the College to add a strategic enrollment plan to the mix, given enrollment declines since 2010. Recommendation 4 directs the College to remedy the confusion around planning by ensuring that all campus constituents have opportunities to help shape institutional plans and are fully informed about how plans are implemented and evaluated.

As noted in our Year Seven Accreditation Self-Evaluation Report, Evergreen's current strategic plan, *"Shaping Our Future, Building on Our Past, 2015-2020"* was finalized in 2014 and approved by the Board of Trustees in 2016. With the strategic plan ending this year, we have begun developing a new strategic plan for Evergreen that builds on and integrates the aforementioned initiatives. Producing a new strategic plan is essential for advancing Evergreen and shaping its future. And as a public institution, the College is required to submit a new strategic plan to accompany our 2021-2023 biennial budget submission to the Office of the Governor and the state's Office of Financial Management in August 2020.

Over the past two years, Evergreen's institutional planning has operated at an accelerated pace, aimed directly at addressing the College's enrollment and budget challenges. Planning has proceeded in two stages. The first stage, *Evergreen Renews*, is focused on developing and implementing a near-term plan to halt and reverse the enrollment decline while also stabilizing College finances and reinforcing our institutional reputation. The second stage, termed *Strategic Academic Directions (Big Bets)*[1], centers on developing a long-term plan for the College that will significantly increase our enrollment and resources in ways that align closely with the College's mission and goals. Through multiple and open conversations among faculty, staff, students, administrators and trustees, in this stage we are re-imagining the College by taking an assets-based approach to identifying new academic directions and building potential institutional models that will better attract and serve a wide array of students. These sequenced planning processes should be understood as forms of strategic enrollment planning.

Evergreen Renews

In December 2017, members of the College's academic and administrative leadership began a literature review focused on college turnarounds, including case studies and organizational frameworks. Terrence MacTaggart's framework from his 2010 work *Academic Turnarounds: Restoring Vitality to Challenged American Colleges/Universities* was adopted. That framework is a three-stage model:

1. Restoring Financial Stability
2. Marketing and Branding
3. Strengthening Academic Programs and Culture

Following this decision, in winter 2017-18 a planning process was launched that resulted in a focused, three-year strategy, *Evergreen Renews,* that built on work currently underway and was introduced to campus in September 2018. A summary of that work was included in our Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report in Chapter 8: Mission Fulfillment, Adaption and Sustainability. As described in the Report, this planning effort built on work that had been recommended by various task forces with the goals of improving mission fulfillment and proactively addressing what at that time was a slow but steady enrollment decline. *Evergreen Renews* includes the following initiatives:

- Academic Paths of Study
- First-Year Experience
- Learning and Teaching Commons @ The Washington Center
- New and Expanded Pre-Orientation Programs
- Improving Campus Climate and Student Belonging
- New Strategies for Student Recruitment
- Inspired Marketing and Expanded Outreach
- Enhancing Evergreen's Reputation
- New Programs in Indigenous Arts and Education
- Proactive Advising

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[1] The "Big Bets" website, https://sites.evergreen.edu/bigbets/, is an internal site that is continually updated to include a comprehensive chronology of meetings held, ideas generated, and decision-points for this project. Evergreen's NWCCU liaison, Ron Larson, has been provided with access to the site. If other reviewers would like access, please contact Julie Slone at slonej@evergreen.edu.

- Improved Uses of Technology in Academic Advising

For each of these initiatives, a project lead submitted a SWOT analysis and a template that laid out goals, strategies, activities, measures of success, contributions to inclusive excellence, evaluation plan, budget, timelines and milestones. *Evergreen Renews* commits the College to three years of focused effort, funding, and evaluation of these initiatives.

At the time of the NWCCU's November 2018 site visit, the College had just begun implementing *Evergreen Renews* initiatives. A challenging re-organization of the College's major divisions informed by budget reductions and personnel changes had delayed the implementation, particularly in units that were re-organized. Despite the re-organization's challenges, a majority of the *Evergreen Renews* initiatives have now been launched due to the commitment and hard work of virtually everyone at the College, and we are in the process of assessing the initial impact on student recruitment and retention.

New Academic Directions (Big Bets)

Now in its second year, *Evergreen Renews* has provided a foundation upon which Evergreen will build a new multi-year strategic plan. At the College's 2019 fall academic retreat, the Provost opened the gathering of faculty and staff by describing the current pressures facing the College and the need to pursue a new long-term academic planning process as the next step towards renewal. Over 100 faculty and staff attended the retreat, along with two trustees and most of the College's senior administrators, and all actively participated in small group discussions about the College's future that were coordinated by the Faculty Agenda Committee and Academic Deans. The outcome of the retreat was a legion of ideas now informing our current year-long new academic directions planning initiative, which has the goal of designing innovative mission-aligned academic offerings that will significantly enhance the College's enrollment and financial stability.

Nicknamed *Big Bets* and incorporating elements of participatory action research and design thinking, the initiative launched with a series of campus-wide "blue sky" conversations in late fall 2019. These sessions presented information on Evergreen's current enrollment challenges, positioned these challenges in the national context, and engaged campus constituents in generative dialogue about how to build on Evergreen's assets to develop new academic directions that would attract hundreds more students. We held a total of eight "blue sky" conversations, and about 230 students, faculty, staff and administrators have participated in the sessions. Many ideas and proposals for curricular directions along with the types of students they will serve have emerged from the conversations, and all agendas, meeting notes, data, readings, ideas and proposals are being posted to an internal website so that the campus community can track the initiative's progress.

A cross-divisional Coordinating Group of thirty faculty, staff, students and administrators guides the *Big Bets* initiative, supported by a small planning team. The planning team began its work early in fall 2019. The Coordinating Group began meeting in mid-November 2019, and is meeting regularly through the 2019-2020 academic year. The Coordinating Group is examining how the ideas and proposals align with the academic needs and interests of prospective student populations, particularly those not currently served well by accredited public four-year institutions in Washington State. The Group is also reviewing data from Evergreen's Office of Institutional Research, discussing research studies and case studies, and prototyping models for Evergreen's future.

A subcommittee of the Coordinating Group is developing a feasibility template that will be used to evaluate the necessary investments and returns for each proposal, and Hanover Research has been contracted to conduct research into viable new academic directions for Evergreen. "Viable" has been defined as having three components: curricular areas with demonstrated student demand in our primary catchment areas; curricular areas and credentials with demonstrated demand by employers; and curricular areas that build upon current resources and strengths of the College. The first research project was a broad market scan which yielded two results. First, eight of the nine Paths of Study that formally launched in September of 2019 align with in-demand career fields in the region. Second, the planned expansion of Evergreen's offerings in business, psychology and computer science align with employer needs in the region. The next two studies provided us with in-depth information about climate justice and sustainability, as well as interdisciplinary computer science. The research work with Hanover is ongoing, and we're currently engaged in focus group research into Evergreen's reputation among prospective students, both locally and nationally.

Projects of sufficient magnitude (e.g., new graduate programs, significant additions to the undergraduate curriculum, or changes in the College's academic structure) will involve collaboration with faculty leadership for full faculty engagement and, if warranted, vote. The Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees will also be fully engaged in the decision-making process. Following approval by Evergreen trustees, projects with accreditation implications will be presented to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities for approval.

Our timeline is ambitious: we aim to have a new mission-specific model for Evergreen determined by June 2020, and to draft an implementation plan in summer 2020. So far we are on track.

Next Steps

These sequenced planning processes—*Evergreen Renews* and *Big Bets*—should be understood as forms of strategic enrollment planning. We are operating on the four-phase recursive strategic enrollment planning model recommended by Ruffalo Noel Levitz:

Phases One and Two: Preparation & Data Analysis and Strategy Development

Situational analysis, key performance indicators, and data collection undergird our strategic enrollment planning, which is embedded in the work on institutional strategy described above. Evergreen also has a standing committee known as the Strategic Enrollment Group which was re-chartered in 2018 to become a group more focused on strategy discussion and data analysis rather than simply data sharing. The existing Strategic Enrollment Group needs a revised charge, including new membership and decision-making authority, to operate as a highly effective planning and leadership body that is part of an integrated institutional approach to planning. As Evergreen's specific enrollment picture changes and the regional and national picture evolves, situational analysis becomes a constant activity as enrollment leaders at the College plan for the short term and the long term. We also must be responsive to Legislative priorities in Washington State.

Phase Three: Goal Development

As the 2018 peer evaluation team noted, strategic enrollment management should be tied to financial resource planning. A change in organizational responsibilities took place in the College's 2018 reorganization to better create this linkage, and the staff of the Vice President for Finance and Operations is now responsible for financial projections and planning. Enrollment goals are being set based upon the College's financial needs, and are determined in consultation with the Olympia and Tacoma academic deans, the graduate program directors, the admissions office, and the enrollment team. The Commission may find Evergreen's targets less granular than those of traditional colleges, as we cannot set targets for each academic department or school. Rather, our targets are broken down by the distinct academic units the College does have: Olympia undergraduate, Tacoma undergraduate, Native Pathways, and each of the three graduate programs.

We appreciate the NWCCU's acknowledgement in Recommendation 3 that a multi-year strategic enrollment management plan must be "realistic." Neither College leadership nor the Evergreen community is under any illusion that reaching our ultimate enrollment goal of 4,000 students will happen quickly. National case studies indicate that this could take up to ten years, and we must make regular annual progress towards that goal. As part of *Evergreen Renews* and *Big Bets* planning, we are setting, assessing and revising data-informed enrollment goals for each initiative.

Phase Four: Implementation & Continuation

As all of the NWCCU's recommendations indicate, Evergreen needs to mature in its approach to institutional planning. In alignment with Phase Four of strategic enrollment planning, Evergreen will construct the necessary policies, processes and structures to support our ongoing strategic planning process. The creation of a continual loop of review and adjustment in our strategic planning process will be crucial for two reasons. First, the feasibility studies that we are developing in spring 2020 as part of the *Big Bets* planning process will suggest new goals, strategies, priorities and action plans that will shape the new multi-year institutional strategic plan, including the strategic enrollment plan. In particular, the *Big Bets* process focuses on designing for the students we currently serve and those we seek to serve, and student-centered decisions made in this process will then inform strategic enrollment planning. Second, the landscape for higher education enrollment is in a time of constant pressure and change, which necessitates constant assessment, innovation and planning. Our new multi-year institutional strategic plan will need to systematize innovation and planning to ensure coordination and sustainability across the institution

Conclusion

On January 18, 2019, we received our reaffirmation letter and recommendations from the Commission. In just over a year, as described in this Report, we have made substantial progress in addressing the areas of improvement requested by the Commission: we have developed a plan for assessing our campus-wide student learning outcomes through collecting and evaluating student work which provides direct measures; we have built on our past planning to advance inclusive excellence at the College, particularly through establishing structures for faculty and staff professional development and administering our first-ever campus climate survey; and we are engaged in systematic and integrated strategic planning which includes enrollment planning.

We appreciate the Commission's engagement and support as we continue to move forward with a series of ambitious College-wide renewal initiatives. We have great hope for Evergreen's future!