

New Academic Directions Summary Report

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I. Introduction

Evergreen's New Academic Directions (NAD) initiative aims to identify and begin implementation of major new academic programs and/or curricular strategies that will substantially increase the College's enrollment and create a path to financial stability. The goal of this advisory report is to provide a status update to the Evergreen community. This report also serves the purpose of providing an important project update to the NAD Steering Committee and Student and Academic Life (SAL) Leadership Team as they consider recommendations on the nature and timing of implementation of elements of this initiative

This report contains a summary of four proposals for new or enhanced curriculum in addition to other curricular and structure elements designed to support student recruitment, retention, and success. The report also includes an initial analysis of the project's projected impacts, risks, and implications for Evergreen's financial and administrative systems. Future editions will provide cost, feasibility and implementation analysis and a holistic estimate of the impact of the entire project on the college's future enrollments, financial status, and operational systems.

Over the course of the 2019-20 academic year the New Academic Directions Coordinating Group examined a wide range of data and case studies on trends and emerging best practices in higher education in the U.S. and worldwide that inform the proposals and implementation plans described in this report. The lifecycle of this initiative consists of four critical stages, that move from development to launch and ultimately sustainable stewardship:

Phase I: Develop and Approve Conceptual Plan (Fall 2019 – Spring 2020)

Phase II: Refine and Assess Conceptual Plan (Summer 2020)

Phase III: Develop Implementation Plan

Phase IV: Implement and Steward the Plan

During the conceptual plan development (Phase I), several project criteria were developed that to define success and guide planning for each component of the plan. The project criteria for success are:

- The redesign is on a large scale, that would attract hundreds of students that are not currently choosing Evergreen
- Able to be supported through new revenue streams (donors, grants, legislative appropriations)
- Has evidence of strong market relevance
- Builds on assets we already possess
- Aligns with existing mission
- Significantly enhances our reputation
- Allows us to tell a compelling story
- Can be implemented within the next three years
- Considers the need to develop new structures or modes of delivery

This report is provided as we near the end of Phase II. The changes being proposed through this initiative are substantial and impact almost all facets of the institution's operations, status and profile. As shown in Figure 1, these include changes in Evergreen's status as a public institution (from a college to a university), structural changes (creating separate schools within the university), curriculum enhancements (adding new Paths, centers, certificates and Capstones), student support structures (moving to a holistic advising model) and modifications to the transcript. In addition, Evergreen will likely accelerate its timetable for implementing closer partnerships with other higher ed institutions as a result of this initiative. Each element of the project has important implications for the college's efforts to center diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Perhaps most fundamentally, the changes proposed through this initiative are shaped by the assumption that Evergreen will seek to serve an increasing number of adult and "New Majority" students, while continuing to attract and serve high school direct students and students attracted to our unique interdisciplinary approach to post-secondary education. This will have a substantive impact on our marketing, recruiting, and admissions processes and many of our administrative and information systems.

To date, four curricular areas have been identified for initial consideration due to their potential to attract students and capitalize on existing curricular strengths. The early work of phase II consisted of convening curricular design teams comprised of faculty and staff to develop expansive proposals for attracting students in the following areas. Each proposal is summarized in Section II.

- A. Interdisciplinary Art and Design
- B. Climate Justice and Sustainability
- C. Workforce Development
- D. Psychology Path of Study

Cross-divisional Feasibility & Implementation Teams have reviewed each proposal and is entering into a consultative process to provide feedback to the curricular design teams to refine the scope and scale of each proposal, clarify cost structures, estimate enrollment impacts, and prepare strategies for phased implementation. These discussions will inform a cost and impact analysis for each proposal, which will in turn inform a recommendation for prioritizing curricular development for future iterations of this report.

Planning Evergreen's future during a pandemic that has impacted BIPOC communities disproportionately and a renewed national movement to interrogate and address racial equity in the United States clarifies the critical need to consider how new curricula, systems, and structures empower and provide new opportunities for students from traditionally underserved and minoritized groups. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are central principles for the initiative, which is reflected in each curriculum proposal. Additionally, the teams reviewing the proposals have placed DEI as critical considerations in their analysis. This initial equity assessment will be deepened with successive editions.

In addition to the elements described in Section III that support curricular cohesion (first-year experience, capstones, certificates, transcripts, experiential learning), two important elements of the project are currently under development. The Holistic Advising Team is projected to have an initial proposal for review by the end of August. The Schools Development Team is currently crafting structural models for schools to share with faculty and staff in early September. These

elements of the NAD initiative interlocking in that the primary goal is to support student success. Thus, the work of these teams needs to be harmonized to produce structures that integrate and are not duplicative. Consequently, this draft of the report relies on initial assumptions about these elements. Additional details will be factored into the analysis, as these components of the initiative are finalized.

The report also includes (Section IV) with a preliminary examination of the risks, challenges, and systems implications of the entire New Academic Directions initiative that considers a series of issues, including current capacity of our administrative systems, the potential impact of the overall model on institutional reputation, an enrollment and fiscal situation analysis, and risks to successfully realizing the goals of the initiative.

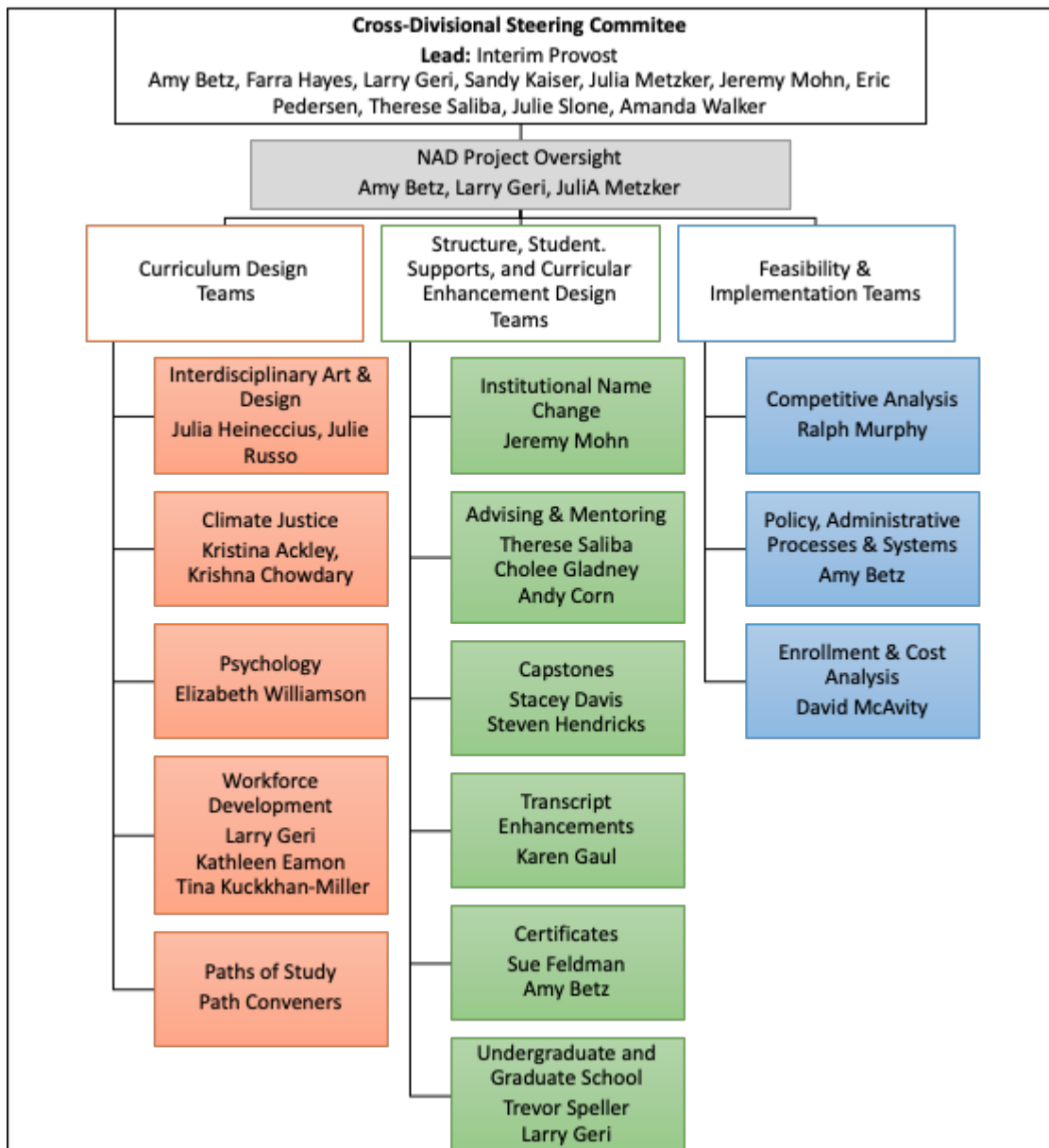


Figure 1. New Academic Directions Project Chart

II. Curriculum Proposals

The curriculum that students' move through to attain a degree is the heart of any higher education enterprise. Curricula that are responsive to students' needs have promise to attract and retain students in the coming future. In response to data from Institutional Research, market analyses by Hanover and our study of national trends, we prioritized five areas in the curriculum: Climate Justice, Interdisciplinary Art and Design, Psychology, Workforce Development and Curricular Cohesion. The teams' most recent proposals (which are available at the Big Bets website) follow a template format crafted by the Feasibility Team to ensure consistency. Each section below includes a summary of the proposals received from the relevant team, a description of the rationale for prioritizing these areas and progress report on development.

A. Climate Justice

There are encouraging signs that attitudes of US residents about the climate crisis are shifting in ways that will support decisive actions against this existential threat. An increasing number of US residents believe climate change is occurring, that it is human caused, and are concerned about lack of action on the problem (see Leiserowitz, et al., 2019; Funk and Kennedy, 2020; and Dennis, Mufson and Clement, 2019). Data also suggest that many younger US residents are both concerned about the climate and are potentially interested enough to focus on it as a post-secondary area of study.

The Hanover Research study completed for the college documented the increasing interest in climate, environmental justice, and sustainability-related issues among younger generations (Hanover 2020a). It also emphasized the projected U.S. increase in occupations closely related to climate, environmental justice and sustainability between 2016 and 2026. They also noted that under half of similar climate programs they benchmarked featured an environmental justice perspective. Hanover recommended that Evergreen pursue a Climate Justice pathway and leverage our existing partnerships with local community bodies to develop environmental justice and sustainability internships or service-learning opportunities.

Strong support for a climate initiative as an element of the New Directions strategy was evident in our initial "Blue Sky" sessions in December 2019. A large group of faculty members from across the college have participated in the work that led to the submission of a Climate Justice and Resilience proposal. Increasing Evergreen's emphasis on climate issues is consistent with the college's long history of support for environmental studies. And the inherent nature of climate change as a set of interconnected and complex issues calls for an interdisciplinary approach to its study.

Many campuses nationwide and within the state of Washington are implementing climate change initiatives, notably the University of Washington's Program on Climate Change. These combine faculty research with related curriculum and tend to focus on climate science, climate change impacts, energy and the multiple social/economic subsystems that will need to be changed to reduce CO2 emissions worldwide.

The Evergreen Climate team's proposal emphasizes climate justice as a defining concept:

Climate Justice is an aspirational idea around which countries, non-profit organizations, grassroots movements, and youth worldwide have mobilized to draw attention to the blatant injustices associated with climate change -- how it disproportionately affects the most vulnerable communities around the world who have the fewest resources to withstand the consequences of

a warming world while having contributed the least to causing it. Beyond this triple injustice, technological and market-based solutions designed to mitigate or adapt to climate change have also been known to further exacerbate vulnerabilities, leading to yet another dimension of climate injustice. Climate Justice is an approach to addressing the climate crisis that is committed to minimize and undo existing forms of inequality and oppression and move towards a more socially just and ecologically sustainable world. This emergent idea has also led to an area of study dedicated to understanding the various meanings, movements, and policies associated with it.

This proposal features a recommendation to create a Center on campus to focus on climate issues, the proposed Center for Climate Action and Sustainability. The Center would be an “interdisciplinary clearinghouse and facilitation hub for research and engagement for innovative collaborations between students, staff, and faculty addressing the most salient crises facing humankind and building a more resilient social and ecological future.” Center staff would assist students and faculty in developing research skills, project opportunities, connecting with community partners and organizing campus events, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. The proposed Center for Climate Action and Sustainability.

The climate curriculum proposed features an interdisciplinary Path of Study, Climate Justice and Resilience with a set of foundational, intermediate and advanced programs, as shown in Figure 3. The two-quarter foundational program Climate Foundation and Futures would be followed by a one-quarter Intermediate program on Climate Justice. Five tracks would be available to students after completion of the intermediate program: Environmental Justice; Global South; Political Economy; Indigenous Resilience; and Agroecology and Just Food Systems. Students would complete at least one quarter of an intermediate program in a track, followed by an advanced program and possible Capstone. The curriculum has an initial focus on 16-credit programs and the faculty would adapt it to meet the needs of part-time and EWS students, possibly through 8 and 12 credit options for the foundational and intermediate programs.

The team envisions this as an interdivisional path. Initially the Path could be supported by a team of five current regular faculty members – one each from one of the natural science focused path; PEGSEJ; if possible Food and Ag; Native American and Indigenous Programs; and Arts and Humanities. The team proposes a cluster hire of five regular faculty positions in the following areas: Political Economy, Agro-ecology, Environmental Justice, Indigenous Resilience, and the Global South (Third World Political Ecology), to support this interdivisional path of study.

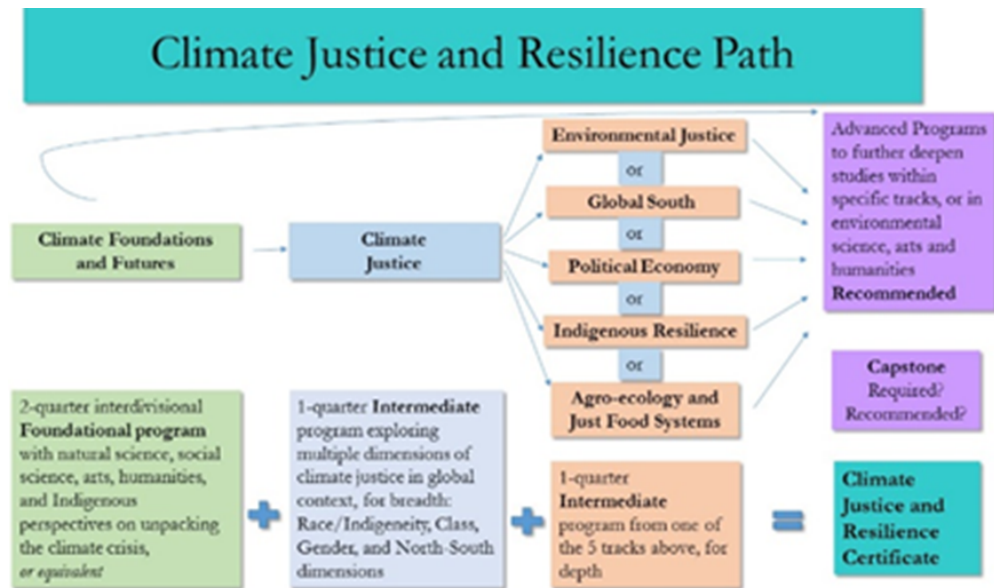


Figure 3. Climate Justice and Resilience Path proposal.

The proposal includes an outline for a Climate Justice and Resilience Certificate for students completing the multi-quarter foundational program and two intermediate programs. Students could focus on one of the five tracks listed above and potentially complete the certificate in under two years.

This proposal has substantial faculty support, features an interdisciplinary area of inquiry that is of national and global importance, and would leverage our faculty strengths in this area. There are also solid anecdotal data suggesting that the incoming generation of students have a strong interest in this topic, and support is building nationally for a “Green New Deal” that would feature large-scale climate justice interventions. The proposed Center is an important element of the concept that could be very attractive to potential donors.

Yet there are conflicting currents of data. Enrollment in climate-related programs at the college over the past few years has been uneven, and the recent survey of possible applicants to the college by Hanover Research placed Climate Science and Policy low on the list of curricular areas they would be interested in studying. Feasibility Team is in the process of providing detailed feedback to the Climate Team on this proposal.

B. Interdisciplinary Art and Design

The concept of featuring a proposal at the intersection of art/design/computer science/media emerged in the early stages of the New Directions process. A study by Hanover Research completed in April 2020 found an increasing demand for technologically skilled designers, although there are a reduced number of institutions providing design-related BA degrees

(Hanover Research, 2020a). Hanover recommended that Evergreen offer a track in multidisciplinary design that incorporated an experiential learning opportunity such as a capstone project or internship.

Although several faculty members with design expertise have departed or retired in recent years, Evergreen is well placed to be able to offer a design-focused curriculum due to our interdisciplinary approach and the strength of our faculty in the related fields. In late June a team began meeting to craft an interdisciplinary design proposal. They were asked to “think big” about what it would take to provide our students and the community a world-class experience.

The team’s Interdisciplinary Arts and Design proposal notes that Evergreen’s pedagogical approach “lends itself perfectly to a forward-thinking interdisciplinary design program that emphasizes the unique interests and needs of individual students and the work those individuals can and will do in the world.” The heart of the proposal is the creation of a Center for Interdisciplinary Art and Design (IAD). The Center would be “an integrated suite of Evergreen facilities focused on designing and making that serve curricular and co-curricular needs across the college.” These facilities would include a 3D Design Computer Lab (an update of an existing computer lab), Physical Design Lab (an expansion of our existing Physical Computing Center) with 3D printers, laser-cutters, robotics, motion capture, circuit design, wearable computing, hardware hacking, etc., and administrative offices and a community lounge for use as a hub for design-focused students and faculty. It would also link to other Centers at the college such as CCBLA and the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and Transformational Change. The proposal has a strong equity focus, as a critical element of the Center’s mission would be to “provide access to design, technology, media, and arts resources for low-income and underrepresented students who will benefit from the use of on-campus facilities and equipment.”

The Center would provide support to students and faculty in the associated curriculum, which would “weave design thinking and skills with learning from other disciplines, with particular focus on environmental stewardship and social justice.” Students would engage with design across visual art, media (image/video/sound), and technology, which in turn would intersect with their studies of the sciences, humanities, performing arts, cultural studies. This would occur in team-taught programs of 8 or 16 credits and 2- and 4-credit IAD courses that would focus on one or more IAD sub-disciplines.

Students also would pursue “project-based learning and certificates that cultivate collaborative, problem-solving, systems-based, and entrepreneurial mindsets, while developing technical skills in both physical and digital modes and knowledge of social justice theory and its practical application. In addition to centering social equity, two distinguishing characteristics of the IAD curriculum and Center are dynamic theory-to-practice and student-centered pedagogy, and an energy and focus that joins other parts of the university in invigorating socially-conscious STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) thinking across the entire curriculum.”

The Path model incorporates a first-year interdisciplinary design cohort, featuring a 2-faculty 16 credit foundation program offered yearly in a 12+4 credit model. The 4 credit section would be available to students outside the program. In addition, 2 or 4 credit online courses would be offered such as “Designing Your Education,” and “Design Thinking.” The group’s proposal describes a set of example pathways for first-time, first-year and transfer students. It also

suggests an array of possible certificates in areas such as Adobe's CC Suite, Audio Engineering and Production, Digital Music Production, Web Design, and Entrepreneurial Product Design, Production, and Marketing, among others.

The proposal notes that an optimal student/faculty ratio for such programs is 15:1. The proposed curriculum could operate at a maximum of 20:1 due to the challenges of providing hands-on training to use advanced equipment, and space, resources and staff capacity limitations.

This exciting proposal would require a significant investment in faculty, support staff, equipment and facilities. The proposed staffing model for the Center includes a Director for the Center (who would teach part-time), plus several support staff (Technician, Design Lab manager, Academic Advisor linked to the CIAD curriculum, Internship Coordinator, Center/Program assistant director, and Center/Program secretary).

Additional faculty hires would be needed in areas that have been (or will be) impacted by retirements and departures, including Animation, Film/Video (community media, documentary); 3D Art (e.g. sculpture, ceramics, metalsmithing, woodworking, furniture design, architecture); 2D Art (e.g. painting, drawing, printmaking, photography, graphic design); Computing (e.g. web design, UI/UX design, VR/AR design, digital fabrication, physical computing, robotics), Art Entrepreneurship, and Game Design. Additional hires with design expertise would likely also be needed. The proposal also recommends adding three visiting artist positions, that would intersect with a community-focused yearly theme determined by the Center.

The proposal suggests a two-phase approach to implementation and lays out steps that could be implemented by current Evergreen faculty and staff, plus others that would require donor, grant or state funding. At a minimum for this to move forward, a faculty position with half-time teaching release would need to be created for an Interim Director for the Center.

The Feasibility Group has performed an initial review of the proposal and is providing the team feedback. This proposal has the potential to be an exciting addition to Evergreen's curriculum, but the challenge is how to scale it appropriately to optimize its impact at a reasonable cost.

C. Workforce Development

Workforce development is a broad term that describes a wide range of activities, policies and programs that aim to create and sustain a viable workforce within a region, while benefitting both individuals and organizations (Haralson, 2010). A robust workforce development system within a region provides organizations of all shapes and sizes—but notably major employers—with people who have the skills needed to support their missions. Supporting policies at the federal and state level, notably The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA; P.L. 113-128) provide resources to support education and training services that “prepare individuals for work and to help them improve their prospects in the labor market” (Bradley, 2015).

Workforce development was already a hot policy arena prior to the arrival of COVID-19. The biggest concern is how automation and digitization pose a threat to many workers, particularly people of color and individuals with a high school degree or less. The latter are four times more likely to be in “automatable” jobs than those with bachelor's degrees, according to McKinsey's 2019 report, *The Future of Work* (McKinsey, 2019). The report estimates that Latinx and African American workers may be the most impacted by these changes given the disparities in the US education system, with up to 12 million displaced. Consequently, effective workforce development strategies can be powerful moves toward equity.

Over the past few months, an Evergreen team has been exploring the national, state and local workforce development system and along with senior staff have interviewed several key local stakeholders. The team examined how Evergreen could increase its profile within that system and craft related classes and certificates that would benefit our students and the community. Because the campus is making a gradual pivot toward attracting a greater number of adult and “New Majority” students, a greater emphasis on workforce development is likely to help us attract and retain students. Many students and potential students in our region and the US are emphasizing career development as a desired outcome of their college experience (Princeton Review, 2020). A focus on workforce development will also provide a new frame for the college locally that will help us resolve our reputational challenge.

Evergreen generally has been successful at preparing its graduates for both future employment and graduate school. It has not, however, participated as a formal partner of the South Sound region’s workforce development system, although we do support state initiatives involving the higher ed sector, such as Career Connect Washington. Our curriculum does have several areas of strength (the Food and Agriculture Path of Study, our computer science programs, and our psychology/health programs) that overlap with three of the six industry clusters (Food Manufacturing; Wood Products; Health Care; Specialty Manufacturing/Logistics; IT/Telecommunications; Tourism and Recreation) identified by the Pac Mountain Workforce Development Council as central to the region’s economy.

Several other areas of Evergreen’s undergraduate and graduate curriculum provide a strong foundation for deeper integration with the workforce development system. These include our other Paths of Study, education, and our three graduate programs. The Master of Public Administration program prepares students for leadership positions in the nonprofit and public sector and has long been a contributor to the success of state government, while the MES and MiT programs have supported the environmental and education sectors in the region. In addition, the development of our business/entrepreneurship pathway and the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and Transformational Change provides us with an opportunity to offer strong classes and certificate programs in business, entrepreneurship and nonprofit management. In addition, we are noted for providing Evergreen graduates with a solid base of critical thinking, communications, and team skills.

The workforce development model adopted by Pac Mountain and many similar regional bodies, shown in Figure 4, emphasizes the role of partnerships in supporting workforce development. Such partnerships may be created between formal Workforce Development agencies (including Pac Mountain, Thurston County EDC, as well as state government agencies such as Employment Security and Enterprise Services); Community and Technical Colleges; Businesses and nonprofit organizations; State agencies; and Tribal Nations. Our interviews found that many of these organizations were eager to partner with us.

Tribal nations are particularly important as we have the opportunity to build upon the strengths of our successes in Native education and tribal relations. With our unique combination of Native academic and public service programs, we are well-positioned to weave together important strands of work in tribal relations, strategic planning, and workforce development.

It is important to mention that many faculty members in the U.S., particularly in the liberal arts college sector, have concerns about tying higher education too explicitly to preparing graduates for future employment. Traditionally the liberal arts have had a broader goal of helping students

Sector Partnerships: The Keystone to Connecting Career Pathways to Industry Cluster Growth

Sector Partnerships align education and training programs with industry needs to produce readily employable workers.

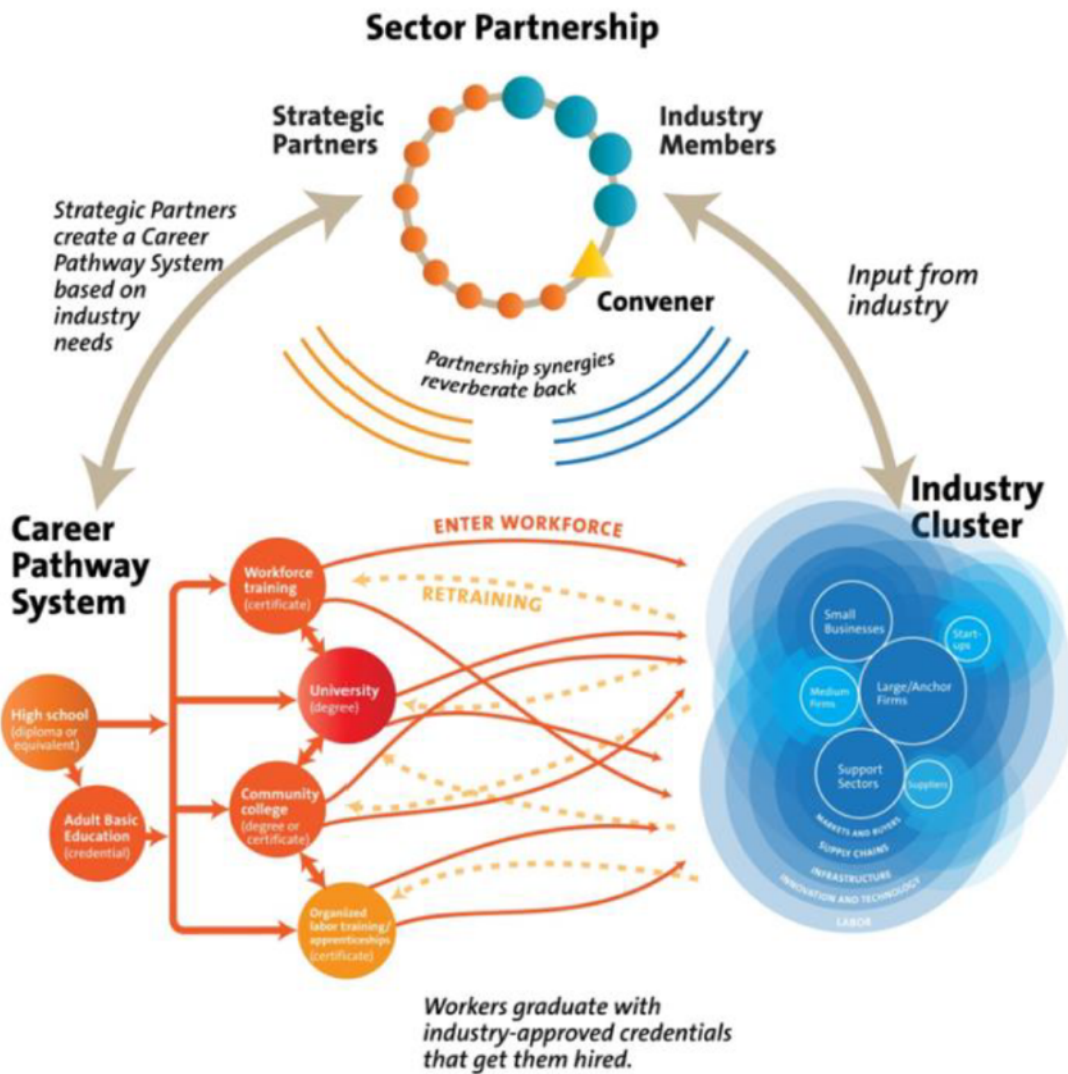


Figure 4. A depiction of the workforce development system emphasizing career pathways and sector partnerships. Source: Pac Mountain Strategic Plan.

expand their “desire and capacity to learn, think critically, and communicate proficiently, and to prepare them to function as engaged citizens” (Becker, 2014). Evergreen’s challenge is to embrace the opportunity to provide our students with a powerful interdisciplinary education that also gives them confidence that they will be prepared for life after graduation.

Gradual implementation of a thoughtful workforce development strategy makes sense for Evergreen. It is consistent with Governor Inslee’s support for career-connected learning throughout the higher ed sector and is a natural fit with our pivot to a curriculum that aims to

attract more adult and New Majority students. There is a reason that CTC's have moved into this arena. Evergreen can be a leader in crafting a strategy showing how a four-year liberal arts college can thoughtfully offer such programs in a manner consistent with its mission. We believe that implementation of such a strategy as an element of our strategic plan could raise our enrollments by 200 students by the start of the second year of implementation, likely 2022-23.

The Workforce Development team is prepared to continue to support this initiative through the 2020-21 academic year. However, the group needs to develop a more detailed understanding of the overall system and specific government programs that are potentially available to our students and the college. This will be needed before we can submit a detailed proposal for consideration that would include specific workforce programs to engage in and partnerships to explore.

Consequently, the team recommended a several-part strategy. First, support current and emerging elements of Evergreen's curriculum that benefit adult students and individuals seeking alternatives to a four-year degree. This would include increasing the college's support for Prior Learning from Experience (PLE), exploring new PLE models, and for an initial set of certificate programs beginning as soon as the 2020-21 academic year that would have a workforce development focus. Several of these are emerging from New Directions relating to Interdisciplinary Design, and Climate Justice, but others (such as Human Resources or other management and entrepreneurship topics) are also possible. This will require a proposal process, a group to review those proposals and make recommendations to appropriate college decision-makers, and careful consideration of possible competitors. (We don't want to replicate something already offered by SPSCC, in particular).

Second, we need to continue the ongoing work by a small team of faculty and staff from the Native American and Indigenous programs at Evergreen. They are planning to engage in dialogue with representatives from local tribal nations (tribal leaders, education directors and human resources staff) to discuss areas of confluence where the educational interests of our closest tribal partners converge with current and potential curricular offerings at the college. They plan to reach out to several tribal nations, including Squaxin Island, Nisqually, Puyallup, Skokomish and Chehalis. They will also examine what Northwest Indian College currently offers in their four-year degree and certification programs to determine what complementary programs might be offered through Evergreen. The findings from the report will provide a basis for the ongoing development of a Tribal Relations plan and will inform the overall strategic plan for the college.

The final component is an investment in additional research needed to support a detailed analysis and proposal of the suite of state and federal programs the college could aim to support. This could be done through engaging a consultant or consulting firm, through a temporary hire of a person with the requisite knowledge and skills, or by providing time to a current employee to take on this work over a several month period. A rough estimate of the cost of such a consultant during the 2020-21 academic year would be roughly \$25,000-50,000 to help us craft a strategy and detailed proposal. Although this is a significant investment at a time of budget retrenchment at the college, a thoughtful workforce development initiative is likely to be a successful component of the institution's overall turnaround strategy. This would also help us determine a sensible set of partners and appropriate goals and activities for those

partnerships. with, the mutual goals of such a partnership, agreement on implementation and on an assessment strategy.

D. Psychology Path of Study

Data from Institutional Research (IR) and Hanover Research show that there is very strong interest in psychology as an area of study at Evergreen. IR surveys and data from Admissions show consistently that it is either the number one or number two topic preferred by current students and applicants to Evergreen, and a recent Hanover survey of potential students (see Table 1) showed it was the top choice of those surveyed. However, our capacity to deliver an exciting and consistent psychology curriculum has been hampered by recent faculty losses. Four psychology faculty have retired or departed from the college over the last few

Table 1. Responses to the question, “Which of the following areas would you be interested in studying? Please select all that apply.” Source: Hanover Research Brand Perception and Curriculum Survey (Hanover 2020b).

Which of the following areas would you be interested in studying? Please select all that apply.	Count	Percent
Sample Size	311	
Psychology	106	34%
Business and Entrepreneurship	90	29%
Arts Design and Media Technology	88	28%
Visual Arts	66	21%
Food and Agriculture	56	18%
Integrated Biology and Chemistry	51	16%
Culture, Text, and Language in World Societies	45	14%
Environmental Studies	44	14%
Interdisciplinary Computer Science	42	14%
Political Economy, Global Studies, and Environmental Justice	38	12%
Mathematical and Physical Sciences	37	12%
Literary Arts	34	11%
Natural Resources Management: Fish, Forest, and Farm	33	11%
Climate Science and Policy	27	9%
Organizational Change and Leadership	20	6%
Other	47	15%
Not sure	14	5%

years. This has made it difficult to maintain the set of psychology programs that have been featured in the college’s curriculum over the past decade or more. This curriculum sought to meet the needs of students preparing for graduate school in either clinical or experimental

psychology, as well as those with an interest in preparing for careers in community psychology and helping professions. We have hired two very capable psychology faculty who will begin in Fall 2020, and so now have three regular Olympia daytime faculty, plus * who have consistently taught psychology courses in EWS.

This proposal is to add three additional regular faculty positions in psychology. This will enable us to have six regular faculty in psychology to properly staff the psychology Path of Study. These new faculty will be expected to teach online and evening courses and programs that will help us attract the adult and New Majority student populations we are focused on in the New Academic Directions project, in addition to interdisciplinary programs in the Olympia-day curriculum. Providing full staffing of this Path group is the quickest way for us to increase our enrollments over the next two years.

The psychology faculty will meet again in fall quarter 2020 to complete their Path proposal, which is likely to include an emphasis on equity, inclusion and multicultural perspectives. In addition, a group of faculty and staff met this summer to discuss approaches to broadening the psychology curriculum. They generated exciting ideas around possible programs, classes and certificates emphasizing health and wellness that could be very attractive to potential students.

Enhancing Evergreen's capacity to feature psychology in the curriculum is likely to be our most successful strategy in the short and long run for increasing our enrollment. The Feasibility Team will work with the faculty to examine options for funding additional psychology faculty lines.

III. Curricular Cohesion

In addition to growing and introducing curriculum in growth areas, curricular cohesion has been identified as a critical strategy for attracting and retaining students. Curricular cohesion is an umbrella term for the practices, policies, and institutional culture that help students successfully navigate academic and co-curricular experiences towards fulfilling their own goals. This plan identifies first-year programs, capstones, certificates, and curricular integration (across full-time, part-time, daytime, evening, weekend, low-residency, and hybrid/online) as critical programmatic approaches to achieving this important component of the plan.

Curricular cohesion in collaboration with local institutions also will be explored, especially strategic curricular innovation with local community colleges to serve more students, strengthen academic pathways, build on community connections, and increase access to diverse, interconnected higher education experiences from Running Start to graduate programs, from certificates to undergraduate completion.

In addition, how college transcripts can be revised to clarify critical student learning outcomes and competencies, and the role of experiential learning, including internships, in enhancing student learning are important pieces of cohesion in Evergreen's curriculum that continue to need attention.

This summer, teams are developing proposals for certificates, capstones, and transcripts that were mentioned specifically in the faculty approved New Academic Directions proposal. A summary of their work to date is provided below.

A. First-year Programs

Evergreen has made great progress towards a cohesive first-year experience by welcoming first-time, first-year (FTFY) students into an intentional and supportive orientation to Evergreen that includes pre-orientation programs, new student orientation, Greener Foundations, and first-year academic programs. Continuing to invest in and improve upon the first-year experience will be an important component of ensuring these students develop a sense of belonging and are supported as they pursue studies that lead to success in career and life.

B. Capstones

Capstone experiences provide an important opportunity for students synthesize the knowledge, skills, and dispositional learning throughout their degree by applying this learning towards signature work. Capstones can take many structural forms but hold in common the opportunity to engage in purposeful practice and integrative learning. Additionally, well-designed capstones can help students prepare and plan for post-graduate success.

A faculty team, convened by Stacey Davis and Steven Hendricks, is currently developing guiding criteria for developing, launching, and sustaining capstones across the curriculum. This team will collaborate with the paths of study, CELTC, CCBLA, and other experiential-learning hubs on campus to build an implementation plan that considers the logistical supports and developmental investments that will be needed for success. The Curricular Area Team Leaders directed the Path Conveners to consider capstones in their 2020 Summer Path Institute planning sessions, which will further inform this work.

C. Certificates

Many higher ed institutions offer sequences of courses within a subject area that are marketed as a “certificate,” since traditionally students completing the series would receive a paper certificate of completion. These are focused and specialized sets of curricula that enable students to demonstrate mastery of specific skills and competencies both to themselves and to potential employers (Jepsen, Troske and Coomes, 2014).

The increasing emphasis on certificates is one of the most important trends in US higher education, as students concerned with high tuition and the investment of time required for a four-year degree often can complete a certificate, typically, in one year or less. Certificates that are well designed can provide documented competencies, knowledges and abilities that benefit students from a workforce perspective and enhance their sense of accomplishment. Several studies (e.g., Carnevale, Garcia, Ridley and Quinn, 2020; Silliman and Schleifer, 2018) have documented the shift of student preferences to certificate options. Other studies have documented the positive impact of certificate completion on student satisfaction and on employment (Jepsen, Troske and Coomes, 2014).

A team led by Sue Feldman and Amy Betz is crafting a framework for Evergreen’s implementation of a set of certificate options. The next iteration of this report will include a deeper analysis of this topic and specific recommendations based on their completed framework.

Certificates fall into at least two main categories, credit generating for matriculated students, and non-credit generating. The team believes that Evergreen’s strategy should be to implement both types of certificates, although over the next two years, the quickest implementation approach is to link planned offerings in an area of study. The college will need to have an

approval group empowered to receive, review and approve certificate proposals. Each proposal will need to include data similar to the templates being completed through the NAD project, and be able to document community need/market demand for the certificate sequence. Certificate programs will need to carefully account for their total costs. Implementation of certificates will be tied to revisions in the Evergreen transcript to ensure that completion is reflected in each student's academic record.

As an institution we should strongly consider whether to make available resources to support development of non-credit bearing certificate programs that are believed to have significant demand. These could be tied to our workforce development initiative, as well as to the new Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and Transformational Change.

Implementation of a high-quality set of certificate programs would likely boost the college's reputation by showing the institution's commitment to satisfying local needs and increasing the perception of rigor in our offerings. Initial certificates that would rely on current curriculum would be likely to have a positive impact on student retention. Over time, such a program would be likely to attract new students who may not have considered the college in the past.

D. Transcripts

The Evergreen transcript contains rich information about a graduate's growth through the course of their degree, yet doesn't readily communicate strengths to potential employers, graduate school admission committees, and others tasked with evaluating qualifications. As the official "record of learning," the transcript plays an important role in communicating to students and the world beyond the institution the curricular experience of a student. Karen Gaul, Lori Klatt, and Julia Metzker, with consultive support from Helen Chen, Director of ePortfolio Initiatives at Stanford University, convened a summer institute to consider how the transcript may be improved or (re)designed to better align with New Academic Directions by providing a succinct snapshot of student skills, knowledge, and achievements. This work will continue throughout the remainder of the summer and into the academic year.

E. Internships and other forms of experiential learning

Although no team is currently working on internships and experiential learning, it is critical that we not lose sight of our need to build Evergreen's capacity to support internships. Internships and experiential learning are a high-impact practice that is a critical element of a higher education experience (Kuh, 2008). And a variety of case studies (notably Aoun's *Robot-Proof* and co-op program at Northeastern University) point to the power of internships in preparing students for their next steps following college, as well as helping them identify areas that are not a good fit for them.

The trends at the college regarding internship support are troublesome. The two staff members who had been devoted to working with local organizations as internship sponsors, and with students and faculty, have departed the college. The number of students who are signing up for internships has decreased in both absolute terms and as a proportion of our overall curriculum. There is good news in that the Center for Community-Based Learning and Action continues to provide strong links to the local non-profit community, and the CELTC over time has the potential to work with local stakeholders over time to expand our network of sponsors.

IV. Feasibility & Implementation

As we search for new opportunities and programming at Evergreen, we must balance the creativity of our faculty, staff and students with analysis that assesses whether these proposals will help us reach our enrollment and financial goals. We must also assess the institution's ability to implement and sustain new programming successfully. This section will briefly summarize the work of the Feasibility and Implementation Team, which is in the process of reviewing and providing feedback on four curriculum proposals and will ultimately examine the impacts on the overall initiative. It will highlight several concerns the team has raised during their initial discussions.

Two years ago, upon the Provost's initiative, the college created a cross-divisional team for institutional implementation of new programming coming from the Student and Academic Life division. This team's membership consists of representatives from offices across the college: enrollment services, business services, institutional budget, inclusive excellence and student success, institutional research, advancement, information technology, marketing, human resources, purchasing and contracts, and academic administration.

Throughout the curricular feasibility/implementation feedback sessions, general and important themes surfaced that rose above specific curricular programming feedback. At the core of the input gathered, the team heard concerns about the ability of our current foundational systems, business processes, equipment, and human resources to meet the demands of current programming and services offered at the college. Multiple years of budgetary reductions at the institution has resulted in erosion of core business processes. Our budget challenges have led to the inability to maintain critical IT and other systems; increased personnel turnover and loss of institutional knowledge; increased workload on the personnel remaining; and lack of coordination and prioritization of workload across the institution. The college's need to respond to the impacts of the current pandemic (COVID-19) has highlighted these deficiencies and the feedback from the team is clearly summarized by stating the institution is in a fragile state.

General themes that came out of the discussion with the feasibility/implementation team include:

- Evergreen is shrinking as we are building. Our systems require too much human labor and it is impacting the quality of delivery of support and services, as well as response time to students, faculty and staff.
- As a value at Evergreen our systems are set up based on the freedom of creating our unique content, policies, and processes. This creates distinctive challenges in delivery. Two examples include, we build and re-build new curriculum and programming annually and we create flexibility in assigning unique equivalencies/credit awards which are manually created for narrative transcripts quarterly, which impacts workload across institution.
- We lack standards for many critical activities and systems, which impacts efficiencies in business processes and systems.
- As a public institution within Washington State, we must comply with regulations and policies for business processes that are in tension with our own creative processes. This causes delay and additional workload for offices in implementation.
- Our lack of cyclical, collaborative and systematic assessment of our policies, business processes, budgets, and systems has made it unclear to the institution how to prioritize and invest in sustainable initiatives.

It is clear to the feasibility/implementation team that the curriculum proposals and the curriculum cohesion elements of the *New Academic Directions Project* are designed to grow our college and expand our ability to meet the needs of a brand-new population of students. The above summary of general themes and concerns identifies the current risks of moving ahead with new initiatives and proposals without addressing some underlying foundational and organizational structures. At the same time, there is clear recognition by the representatives of this team that we must act now in to build new curriculum and related support programs.

The team recommends that the college begin to review, assess, prioritize, and update key internal organizational systems and structures as we review the comprehensive New Directions proposals and make decisions about implementation. By raising these issues now the Team wants to make clear the opportunity for Evergreen to create sound and efficient systems so that when we begin to implement new initiatives they will have the support and foundational systems they need to be successful.

V. Summary Analysis and Future Directions

The recent New Directions Market Study summarized the state of higher education in the US and the risks and opportunities faced by Evergreen at this moment. That analysis concluded that the new model for the institution being crafted through the New Directions project—featuring new curricular structures, exciting new curriculum, support for curricular cohesion, and the adoption of a new name—provided a significant opportunity to increase our enrollments. It was judged as having the potential to change perceptions of the institution on the part of potential students and their parents as well as to attract more adult and New Majority students.

The college is embarking on initiating an ambitious initiative to develop new curricular programs and structures at a moment when financial, human, and material resources are shrinking. None of these components can be fully realized without new investments. Paradoxically, sufficient critical mass of new curriculum that provides a strong and exciting external narrative about the project is paramount to enrollment recovery. Clearly, significant fund-raising will be needed for each proposal, which may take months to years to acquire. Senior leadership has difficult decisions to make regarding which and to what degree each of the elements emerging from this process can be supported. Additionally, prioritization criteria are needed to determine the appropriate sequence and timeline for implementation for each component of the plan and to potentially determine if some components aren't possible under current conditions.

Furthermore, the COVID pandemic, resulting recession, and uncertainty about remote vs. in-person instruction for fall 2020 have led many current and prospective students to ask fundamental questions about the value of higher education and what they want out of a college experience. As a result, student preferences have likely shifted over the past several months, casting new uncertainty over the market studies that inform the understanding of student demand that undergirds this initiative. These new conditions require a cautious interpretation of data acquired prior to April 2020 and consideration of potential emerging markets that are yet unknown.

What is still true, is that future demographics will continue the trend towards older student populations with an increasing demand to pivot towards supporting the needs of transfer and part-time students seeking degrees. This pivot has significant implications for how we organize faculty work and expectations. The college's regular faculty have traditionally planned curriculum using a 16-credit coordinated studies model as the norm. Offering part-time and two-

year pathways to degree requires reimagining how curriculum is planned, developed, and offered. Coordination with teams proposing new curriculum will be important to ensure that the structures, skills, and capacities that support success of transfer and part-time students are prioritized in future curriculum proposals. This pivot demands ubiquitous and responsive faculty development opportunities.

This pivot also requires we redesign our current advising model to better support students from the moment they express interest in Evergreen through the academic and co-curricular pathway and, ultimately, into post-graduate success. An effective and responsive advising structure requires increased capacities for advising and mentoring characterized by close coordination between faculty and staff on behalf of individual students – a coordination that we have been challenged to achieve in the past. As the report documents below, the capacities of our administrative support systems are stressed due to budget cuts, staff departures, and an increasing volume of work required to maintain current levels of service while simultaneously planning for widespread, visionary transformation. The systems critical to supporting and sustaining institutional work will need to be streamlined and strengthened for this initiative to be successfully implemented.

Further iterations of this report will seek to examine the interrelationships between the individual components of the plan mentioned herein as well as estimating the synergistic impacts on enrollment and institutional revenues. As was noted in the June 2020 impact study, the comprehensive nature of this initiative carries with it the opportunity for Evergreen to improve its reputational narrative, making a holistic assessment of impact not limited to possibilities of each individual component critical to success.

Yet the combination of elements summarized in this report provide reasons for optimism. The curricular cohesion elements are coming into focus, work on models of schools is proceeding, and we have a strong set of curriculum proposals. Although they have more work to do, these proposals include an expansion of the curriculum we offer to adult and New Majority students who are likely to be part-time and appreciate the flexibility of online and hybrid offerings.

Because its work is still in process, the report provides limited information on the work of the holistic advising team, but arguably a new and robust advising model will be the linchpin of this entire initiative, as it has been at several other turnaround colleges. These models change the nature of the relationship between the institution and each student and have been associated with higher retention and student satisfaction.

We are also encouraged by the significant energy our staff, faculty and students have put into this work over the past several months, and especially this summer. This hard work in the face of the COVID pandemic, a collapsing economy, and painful but encouraging moves toward racial justice are a testament to the belief in our community that Evergreen's best days lie ahead.

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