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Evergreen's Social Contract

When you make the decision to come to Evergreen, you are also making the decision to become closely associated with its values.

A central focus of those values is freedom — freedom to explore ideas and to discuss those ideas in both speech and print; freedom from reprisal for voicing concerns and beliefs, no matter how

unpopular. It's this freedom that is so necessary in a vibrant, dynamic learning community.

As members of the Evergreen community, we acknowledge our mutual responsibility for maintaining conditions under which learning can flourish—conditions characterized by openness, honesty, civility and fairness. These conditions carry with them certain rights and responsibilities that apply to us both as groups and as individuals. Our rights — and our responsibilities — are expressed in Evergreen's Social Contract, a document that has defined and guided the college's values since its very beginning.

The Social Contract is an agreement; a guide for civility and tolerance toward others; a reminder that respecting others and remaining open to others and their ideas provides a powerful framework for teaching and learning.

The Social Contract — A Guide for Civility and Individual Freedom

Evergreen is an institution and a community that continues to organize itself so that it can clear away obstacles to learning. In order that both creative and routine work can be focused on education, and so that the mutual and reciprocal roles of campus community members can best

reflect the goals and purposes of the college, a system of governance and decision making consonant with those goals and purposes is required.

Purpose

Evergreen can thrive only if members respect the rights of others while enjoying their own rights. Students, faculty, administrators, and staff members may differ widely in their specific interests, in the degree and kinds of experiences they bring to Evergreen, and in the functions which they have agreed to perform. All must share alike in prizing academic and interpersonal honesty, in responsibly obtaining and in providing full and accurate information, and in resolving their differences through due process and with a strong will to collaboration.

The Evergreen community should support experimentation with new and better ways to achieve Evergreen's goals, specifically, it must attempt to emphasize the sense of community and require members of the campus

community to play multiple, reciprocal, and reinforcing roles in both the teaching/learning process and in the governance process.

Freedom and Civility

The individual members of the Evergreen community are responsible for protecting each other and visitors on campus from physical harm, from personal threats, and from uncivil abuse. Civility is not just a word; it must be present in all our interactions. Similarly, the institution is obligated, both by principle and by the general law, to protect its property from damage and unauthorized use and its operating processes from interruption. Members of the community must exercise the rights accorded them to voice their opinions with respect to basic matters of policy and other issues.

The Evergreen community will support the right of its members, individually or in groups, to express ideas, judgments, and opinions in speech or writing. The members of the community, however, are obligated to make statements in their own names and not as expressions on behalf of the college. The board of trustees or the president speaks on behalf of the college and may at times share or delegate the responsibility to others within the college. Among the basic rights of individuals are freedom of speech, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, freedom of belief, and freedom from intimidation, violence and abuse.

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Individual and Institutional Rights

Each member of the community must protect: the fundamental rights of others in the community as citizens; the rights of each member of the community to pursue different learning objectives within the limits defined by Evergreen's curriculum or resources of people, materials, equipment and money; the rights and obligations of Evergreen as an institution established by the state of Washington; and individual rights to fair and equitable procedures when the institution acts to protect the safety of its members.

Society and the College

Members of the Evergreen community recognize that the college is part of the larger society as represented by the state of Washington, which funds it, and by the community of greater Olympia, in which it is located.

Because the Evergreen community is part of the larger society, the campus

is not a sanctuary from the general law or invulnerable to general public opinion.

All members of the Evergreen community should strive to prevent the financial, political or other exploitation of the campus by an individual or group.

Evergreen has the right to prohibit individuals and groups from using its name, its financial or other resources, and its facilities for commercial or political activities.

Prohibition against Discrimination

There may be no discrimination at Evergreen with respect to race, sex, age, handicap, sexual orientation, religious or political belief, or national origin in considering individuals' admission, employment, or promotion. To this end the college has adopted an affirmative action policy approved by the state Human Rights Commission and the Higher Education Personnel Board.* Affirmative action complaints shall be handled in accordance with state law, as amended (e.g., Chapter 49.74 RCW; RCW 28B.6.100; Chapter 251-23 WAC).

Right to Privacy

All members of the college community have the right to organize their

All members of the college community have the right to organize their personal lives and conduct according to their own values and preferences, with an appropriate respect for the rights of others to organize their lives differently.

All members of the Evergreen community are entitled to privacy in the college's offices, facilities devoted to educational programs and housing. The same right of privacy extends to personal papers, confidential records and personal effects, whether maintained by the individual or by the institution.

Evergreen does not stand in loco parentis for its members.

Intellectual Freedom and Honesty

Evergreen's members live under a special set of rights and responsibilities, foremost among which is that of enjoying the freedom to explore ideas and to discuss their explorations in both speech and print. Both institutional and individual censorship are at variance with this basic

freedom. Research or other intellectual efforts, the results of which must be kept secret or may be used only for the benefit of a special interest group, violate the principle of free inquiry.

An essential condition for learning is the freedom and right on the part of an individual or group to express minority, unpopular, or controversial points of view. Only if minority and unpopular points of view are listened to and given opportunity for expression will Evergreen provide bona fide opportunities for significant learning.

Honesty is an essential condition of learning, teaching or working. It includes the presentation of one's own work in one's own name, the necessity to claim only those honors earned, and the recognition of one's own biases and prejudices.

*The college's anti-discrimination policy is now approved only by the Governor's Affirmative Action Policy Committee (GAAPCOM).

Open Forum and Access to Information

All members of the Evergreen community enjoy the right to hold and to participate in public meetings, to post notices on the campus, and to engage in peaceful demonstrations. Reasonable and impartially applied rules may be set with respect to time, place and use of Evergreen facilities

in these activities.

As an institution, Evergreen has the obligation to provide open forums for the members of its community to present and to debate public issues, to consider the problems of the college, and to serve as a mechanism of widespread involvement in the life of the larger community.

The governance system must rest on open and ready access to information by all members of the community, as well as on the effective keeping of necessary records.

In the Evergreen community, individuals should not feel intimidated or be subject to reprisal for voicing their concerns or for participating in governance or policy making.

Decision-making processes must provide equal opportunity to initiate and participate in policy making, and Evergreen policies apply equally regardless of job description, status or role in the community. However,

college policies and rules shall not conflict with state law or statutory, regulatory and/or contractual commitments to college employees.

Political Activities

The college is obligated not to take a position, as an institution, in electoral politics or on public issues except for those matters which directly affect its integrity, the freedom of the members of its community, its financial support and its educational programs. At the same time, Evergreen has the obligation to recognize and support its community members' rights to engage, as citizens of the larger society, in political affairs, in any way that they may elect within the provision of the general law.

Student Conduct Code/Grievance and Appeals

Complementing Evergreen's Social Contract is the Student Conduct Code-Grievance and Appeals Process. This document defines specific examples of Social Contract violations and delineates appropriate corrective action. The code also defines the role of the grievance officer and describes the processes for informal conflict resolution, grievances and appeals procedures.

Copies of the Student Conduct Code are available at the Office of the [Vice](#)

[President for Student Affairs](#), SEM 4172.

Copies of Evergreen's policy on sexual harassment are available from the [Equal Opportunity Office](#), SEM I Annex, B.

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Olympia, Washington 98505
(360) 867-6000

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