



November 15, 2024

Pat Sullivan, Director
Office of Financial Management
Insurance Building, PO Box 23113
Olympia, WA 98503-3113

Dear Director Sullivan,

Thank you for your message of November 8 regarding budget reductions for the next biennium. The Evergreen State College understands the seriousness of our state's budget challenges. We appreciate your leadership in this moment.

Evergreen will make whatever cuts may be generally required of us. The specifics of how we might take such cuts will necessarily be determined through required consultations with stakeholders and, ultimately, by our Board of Trustees.

Three comments may be helpful to OFM's planning for higher education:

- Evergreen, like the other baccalaureate institutions, was already anticipating cutting budgets to address a deficit, entirely separate from the General Fund deficit. For several years now, our costs (mostly labor costs) have risen at a rate that far outstrips our ability to raise revenue from tuition.
- We have all learned through previous budget cuts that reductions of state support to baccalaureate institutions generally have effects contrary to the state's goals. Reduced support for students means that students would be less likely to graduate. (This is especially true for the historically underserved students who attend Evergreen.) Reduced academic offerings means that students who do graduate would take longer to do so.
- Evergreen has distinguished itself over the past three years by a steep rate of enrollment growth. We plan to continue that growth for several more years. A significant cut at this time puts those gains in serious jeopardy.

I know that you and the Governor understand all this. And I know that you have some difficult decisions to make. I will be eager to work with you on ideas to offset any necessary reductions in General Fund support for higher education institutions.

Sincerely,

John Carmichael, PhD
President