



February 6, 2025

K. D. Chapman-See, Director
Office of Financial Management
Insurance Building, PO Box 23113
Olympia, WA 98503-3113

Dear Director Chapman-See,

Thank you for your message of January 24 requesting proposed budget reductions for the next biennium. The Evergreen State College understands the gravity of our state's budget challenges. We appreciate your leadership in this moment.

Evergreen will make whatever cuts may be 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.

What is true for higher education institutions generally is true for Evergreen. Budget cuts force us to reduce support for students, which harms their ability to complete degrees and successfully compete for family-wage jobs. Budget cuts force us to reduce academic offerings, which means that students will take longer to graduate, ultimately raising the cost of those degrees.

Under the current funding model, the effects are actually worse. The budget-cut scenario that you are asking for is in addition to cuts the college will make to address a serious deficit, entirely separate from the state's 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. This condition creates a ratcheting vise grip that requires us to make cuts, even if General Fund support is steady.

This is the case despite robust enrollment growth (+19%) at Evergreen over the past three years. Under the current funding model, growth barely pays for growth. Across the system, this condition risks creating a disincentive for institutions to enroll more Washington state undergraduates, an outcome exactly counter to the state's stated workforce education goals.

We know there are no easy choices here. Early learning, K-12 schools, community colleges and four-year institutions are integral parts of our state's education ecology, where students learn, grow and eventually emerge as powerful contributors to Washington's economic vitality and civic life. All parts of this ecosystem, including our public four-year colleges, need support to succeed.

We are eager to work with you on ideas to offset any necessary reductions in General Fund support for higher education institutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JC' followed by a stylized flourish.

John Carmichael

President
The Evergreen State College