

Perhaps all of us, including you, should be asking ourselves some questions during this time of change and unrest at Evergreen. What are we willing to do to make sure Evergreen is accessible to poor and low-income students? What am I going to do if I can't afford to go to school next year? How would I have organized the occupation differently? What suggestions would I make for next time? Why are these budget cuts happening and how will they affect me and my fellow students? How could Evergreen's budget be shuffled to meet the needs of a greater number of people? What would I take money from? Where would I put it? What is Evergreen for anyway? Is it a degree production line? What should it be? What am I going to be able to do with my education after I graduate? Do I have a future? Where are we going? And, yeah, it's true, we don't like authority. ...Do you?

We will only be able to answer these questions together.

In the end, the occupation was a success. We demonstrated to a large segment of the student population that taking matters into their own hands is easier than it looks. Space can be occupied with minimum risk and effort. More importantly, space can be occupied communally and decisions can be made without a bureaucracy or leaders. We don't know what is going to come next, but if it is going to be a success, we all have to be direct, respectful, and together in our efforts.

Here's to the future, everyone!

**OCCUPY EVERYTHING
DEMAND NOTHING**

Hee Occupation Postscript



**Some Reflections
And
Explanations**

From the 19th to the 21st of February, the Housing Community Center (HCC) was occupied by several dozen autonomous individuals. Two doors leading outside, the door to the Corner Store, and the door to the mail room were barricaded to prevent the police from entering. A short list of rules was posted on the wall: No drugs or alcohol, no non-consensual activity, no property destruction. Free food was brought inside, along with an array of literature and information regarding occupation and the budget cuts. When the police arrived, the occupiers told them that they would not be leaving until Sunday the 21st. The police never attempted to shut down the occupation. On the night of the 19th there was a masquerade dance party, complete with a mask-making craft table and plenty of glitter, that lasted until 3 AM. On the 20th, three meals were served and several workshops took place, including one lead by an Evergreen professor. That night a few bands played and people socialized long into the morning.

This occupation was organized and carried out by a diverse collection of students, alumni, and community members. Nope, sorry, we're not just a bunch of rich kids. Nor are we all white. Nor are we all male. We come from all kinds of families and live all kinds of lives. While some of us share friendships, some of us didn't really know each other before this weekend. What brought us together was not a particular tendency towards tantrums, as some critics seem to assume. Instead, what we share is a strong feeling that decisions that affect Evergreen should be made by the students, student-workers, workers, and faculty members who run it! The occupation of the HCC was our attempt to create a space where students could come together to discuss how to make this temporary dream a permanent reality. In the process we've learned a lot.

One of the chief complaints circulating about the occupation of the HCC was that the Corner Store closed and that many students were inconvenienced by a perceived lack of access to mail and laundry. In reality, mailboxes and laundry were there and open the entire weekend. The mail-room is never open on the weekend. Heeding the message on a banner hung from the front of the HCC, many students felt "free to come and go" during the occupation and did what they needed to do. Some intending to simply wash a load or grab their mail even ended up with a free snack or some information as an added bonus. However, we certainly could have been a bit more welcoming and explicit about our intentions for the occupation.

It is true that some students were banned from entering the HCC during the occupation. These people were on-duty Resident Directors, Resident Assistants, and known snitches. (One RD, once off-duty, freely entered the HCC to bring us a lovely tea service. We were very thankful for the support.)

In planning this "soft", permeable occupation, we took the Corner Store into consideration and intended to allow it to open and operate as usual. We didn't want workers to lose hours, nor did we wish to stop anybody from eating or buying other things they might have needed or wanted. We wished for the Corner Store to remain open so that students would be circulating in and out of the HCC and would get the chance to experience an

autonomous space they might not have dared enter otherwise.

The door to the Corner Store was barricaded with a couch after it closed on Friday night to make sure that police would be unable to enter the building from behind once the occupation commenced. For this same reason, the mail door was also barricaded. We intended to remove the barricade from the Corner Store door in the morning. Unfortunately, things didn't quite go as planned.

Saturday morning, we spoke with a campus food service manager when he arrived at the HCC. He wished us well (even suggesting that we could get coffee from the Seminar II Cafe if we wanted), but told us that the barricades on two of the HCC doors presented a potential fire hazard and that he wished for the Corner Store to remain closed. We also spoke with an opening employee who said he didn't really care whether he could work or not. One occupier told him that she would be willing to figure out how to cover any wages lost and that he should pass this message along to his coworkers. According to what we were told on Sunday morning, this individual did end up getting paid for the day, but he might have been the only one. Thus, the offer still stands. Any employee who lost wages due to the closing of the Corner Store during the occupation is invited to contact getyerloot@gmail.com.

Despite some complaints on the internet, many students who came to the HCC looking to buy food at the Corner Store were perfectly happy sharing a free community meal instead. All were welcome to eat the fresh fruit, baked goods, chocolate, and fresh-cooked dishes we brought to the HCC, and we tried to make this clear. If we had known the Corner Store would be closed, we would have brought even more.

We were attempting to create a different kind of space in a building normally serving utilitarian purposes. After all, how many people really use the Housing Community Center as a Community Center? To be sure, this past weekend, a temporary community blossomed in the HCC and spilled onto the sidewalk and sunny field. What made this different than any other weekend on lower campus?

We did these things with a purpose. For thirty-six hours, those of us who have been struggling to cope with the effects of those in power demonstrated our collective ability to create another world. We all had our own hopes and inspirations for the action we took this weekend. Some participated in the occupation because they wanted to take a small part of our school back from those who would allow budget cuts to rob it from us. Others wanted to show people that they can not only liberate spaces from the administration's guidelines, but that they can also question how space is utilized. A space is not public, common, or free if the hours one can access it are limited by authority and bureaucracy. Some of us wanted to redefine the university as a site of struggle and resistance. The occupation allowed many of us to explore the potential of molding familiar space from the unfamiliar, of turning strangers into people we could trust and with whom we could create community.