

SENATE RESOLUTION

8650

By Senators Fraser, Schoesler, Chase, McCoy, Honeyford, Jayapal, Kohl-Welles, Hasegawa, Keiser, Hill, Parlette, Nelson, Frockt, Hewitt, and Bailey

1 WHEREAS, Dr. Thomas L. "Les" Purce is retiring from his position
2 as president of The Evergreen State College in August 2015, after
3 serving fifteen years in the position and two prior years as interim
4 president; and

5 WHEREAS, Dr. Purce previously served at Washington State
6 University as Vice President of Extended University Affairs and Dean
7 of Extended Academic Programs; and

8 WHEREAS, Dr. Purce is an exemplar of a public servant in higher
9 education, with his twenty-six year career in Washington state
10 preceded by public service at the University of Idaho as the Special
11 Assistant to the President and Director of the Research Park and
12 Economic Development; election as the first African American elected
13 official in the state of Idaho, where he served as a mayor and
14 council member for the City of Pocatello; and service as the director
15 of Idaho's departments of Administration and Health and Welfare under
16 Governor John Evans; and

17 WHEREAS, Under Dr. Purce's leadership, Evergreen has been
18 consistently recognized as a national leader and model in the
19 development of interdisciplinary learning communities that combine
20 and coordinate several academic subjects in an innovative approach to
21 study of the arts and sciences; and

22 WHEREAS, Dr. Purce guided Evergreen's strong promotion and
23 pursuit of community engagement, curricular innovation, and

1 development of academic programs that encourage students to
2 apply classroom learning to practical problems in their
3 professional, civic, academic, and artistic pursuits; and

4 WHEREAS, Under Dr. Purce's leadership, Evergreen has emerged
5 as a leader in reducing the length of time and cost required to
6 earn a bachelor's degree, and has been repeatedly recognized as
7 a top public liberal arts and science institution by U.S. News
8 and World Report, the Princeton Review, and Washington Monthly;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, Dr. Purce worked actively with faculty and staff to
11 achieve above average student engagement on many benchmark
12 measures of the National Survey of Student Engagement, including
13 level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning,
14 student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences,
15 and supportive campus environment; and

16 WHEREAS, Dr. Purce strengthened Evergreen's commitment to
17 serving, educating, and graduating underrepresented students by
18 establishing the College as a leader for historically
19 underrepresented, first-generation, and low-income students, and
20 expanding partnerships with Washington's tribes and military
21 partners; and

22 WHEREAS, Dr. Purce has overseen the growth of Evergreen's
23 main campus in Olympia; program in Tacoma; partnerships with
24 Grays Harbor College, South Puget Sound Community College, and
25 Centralia College; unique reservation-based program for Native
26 American students at six locations in the Puget Sound; and more
27 than 400 articulation agreements with over thirty Washington
28 community colleges; and

29 WHEREAS, Dr. Purce successfully guided Evergreen through the
30 economic crisis of the Great Recession, while still
31 strengthening the College's commitment to serving
32 underrepresented students in the liberal arts and sciences; and

33 WHEREAS, Dr. Purce's professional legacy of true dedication
34 towards higher education will continue to live on through the
35 students and faculty he inspired and worked with;

36 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State
37 Senate recognize and congratulate Dr. Thomas L. "Les" Purce for
38 his twenty-eight years of service to higher education in

1 Washington, and for his dedication to quality, efficiency,
2 diversity, equity, and sustainability in the liberal arts and
3 sciences; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
5 immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to Dr.
6 Purce and the Board of Trustees of The Evergreen State College.

7 I, Hunter G. Goodman, Secretary of the Senate,
8 do hereby certify that this is a true and
9 correct copy of Senate Resolution 8650,
10 adopted by the Senate
11 April 21, 2015

12 HUNTER G. GOODMAN
13 Secretary of the Senate