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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Dr. Purce guided Evergreen's strong promotion and pursuit of community engagement, curricular innovation, and
development of academic programs that encourage students to apply classroom learning to practical problems in their professional, civic, academic, and artistic pursuits; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate recognize and congratulate Dr. Thomas L. "Les" Purce for his twenty-eight years of service to higher education in
Washington, and for his dedication to quality, efficiency, diversity, equity, and sustainability in the liberal arts and sciences; and

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

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

HUNTER G. GOODMAN
Secretary of the Senate