

# ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

## 1999-2000 ANNUAL REPORT

### SUMMARY

This year the Chair of the Campus Environmental Issues Committee was Karyn Kaplan. The committee focused on issues related to transportation, sustainability and campus resources. Additionally, past accomplishments were reviewed and evaluated for necessary follow-up. The committee created 3 subcommittees: transportation, education and green building. Additionally, upon recommendation of the committee, the campus Bicycle Coordinator was appointed as an ex-officio.

This year the committee continued to move forward on several issues, while providing support and advocacy for other environmentally based projects on campus. Essentially, the committee was interested in working on issues directly related to the continued implementation process of Campus Environmental Policy.

It was a fulfilling year because many issues that were brought up, were discovered to be the focus of other committees. In reviewing the past years accomplishments, the committee has begun to recognize that there needs to be a focus on promotion of these accomplishments and additional educational efforts to create a campus awareness of this stewardship. This is something that the committee will be focusing on in the next academic year. It is humbling to reflect upon all of the accomplishments and effects that this committee has had on University practices. Continued support from the administration has been an essential component.

Mary Clayton will serve as Chair for the committee in the upcoming year.

### SUB-COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

#### EDUCATION

This subcommittee continued to work on upgrading the committee website. Advertisements in the Emerald continued this year through the gracious funding of the VP of Administration. Once again, a Journalism advertisement class provided some ads that were used. A focus of the advertisements this year, promoted the purchase of tree-free and recycled papers offered through Dept. of Printing and Campus Copy Shop.

The committee decided to take a year break from the Environmental Citizen of the Year awards that have been promoted and awarded during Earthweek. After reviewing the past years, the committee recognized that it has been difficult to stimulate nominations for this award and decided to review this program again next year. The committee agreed that these awards were beneficial.

#### GREEN BUILDING

As a result of the recent announcement of several new construction projects on campus, the

Committee decided to create a green building subcommittee to advocate for green building practices in all campus projects. The subcommittee met with the Planning Director (who is a member of the committee) and one of the Campus Planners. It was brought to the subcommittee's attention that the Campus Planning Committee was already in the process of creating Sustainable Development Guidelines for campus.

As a result, the subcommittee work was re-focused from creating this type of document, to educating committee members on what was being developed and proposed. Additionally, the committee moved into a new role of providing feedback and input into this process. The Campus Planning Committee presented this document to the committee and asked for committee feedback. There have been several opportunities for these issues to be presented to the committee at meetings.

#### TRANSPORTATION

The transportation subcommittee worked hard this year to assess the long term transportation plan for the University in order to educate the Committee and make recommendations on pro-active steps that can be taken to support this plan. The subcommittee reviewed the Choices document created in 1996.

We discovered that there were several items that were implemented, but it appears that the campus remains unaware of these actions and opportunities. For instance: few people were aware that there were spots specifically designated for car pool parking. Other items that were supposedly implemented were things that were pro-active but not well-promoted. The committee supports the establishment of a Transportation Resource Center in the EMU which would help create more awareness on these opportunities.

#### OTHER ISSUES:

The committee worked on several other issues as they came up through the year:

#### ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT CLASS

The Committee was pleased to see the Campus Environmental Audit Class be taught Fall Term. The Committee met with the class and was educated on the class process and assessment proposal for the term.

The final assessment and recommendations were presented to the committee in April, 2000. A recurring theme of the assessment, was that there was little campus awareness of all of the environmental programs, projects and the university commitment to environmental stewardship. It was evident that the Environmental Issues Committee has an opportunity to review these issues and address them in next year's committee goals. As a result, the committee will discuss potential projects for educational and promotional projects on campus environmental issues for the next committee year. One of the areas that has been discussed is to promote the Campus Environmental Policy.

#### FREE PRINTING AND THE TECH FEE

It was noted that through the tech fee funding, students had unlimited access to printing. The Library Administration approached the committee on this issue. The Library recognized the high

cost from unprecedented paper use, impact of paper waste, expense to printers, load on electrical systems and frustration from students who found themselves waiting hours to get things printed as they were stuck behind users printing endless unused pages from the web. The Committee supported the Library's decision to begin charging for printing. As a result, printing use went down 80%.

The Committee Chair met with the EMU Student Director on this issue as the EMU did not implement the same system as the Library. The Environmental Audit addressed this issue. The Committee recommended that the tech fee be re-evaluated to incorporate a limit on the amount of copies that students could make without being charged. It was also noted that Campus Recycling has seen a notable increase in the demand for recycling service in this area as a result. The waste was recognized by the EMU Student Director (Greg Lobisser) who told the Chair that this issue was noted and being addressed by the ASUO executive. The most recent update to the committee was that the idea of implementing a scanner card system with limited free copies, was being evaluated. There has been no further information on this issue.

#### COMPUTER EQUIPMENT, HARD GOODS AND STATE SURPLUS

The issue of an increase in unusable unrecyclable computer waste (such as broken, unrepairable or obsolete computers, keyboards, monitors, printers) was discussed and researched at length at several committee meetings. Currently, as these items are state property, they can only be handled in one of three ways:

1. Sent to StRUT (a State Program called Students Recycling Used Technology), where ONLY StRUT approved schools can receive these materials.

**\*\*Of note:** many schools cannot qualify for this program as the qualifications are strict and geared towards schools where there is already existing resources for technology. Additionally, representatives of this program have indicated they only want to receive 486 computers or better equipment.

2. Sent to State Surplus, where it is often sold to computer recyclers who purchase pallets of this equipment, glean out the valuable parts and usable equipment and then dispose of the rest.

3. Sent to landfill.

Of note: The University of Oregon already tries to find a home for usable equipment through campus networks. By the time it is ready to leave the University, it is either not working or the technology is outdated in terms of being re-saleable.

StRUT has also been selective about what items they will take and it has been a challenge to have them pick-up things designated for this process. This is a frustrating situation for the University. There have been opportunities for the University to donate these to entities other than StRUT, but due to the requirement that only StRUT receives donations of computer equipment, these donations could not be made. Under the current legislation, these items are not getting reused and recycled but are ending up in the landfill. This is costing the University an increasing amount of money in transportation costs to ship these to Salem, when there are several alternatives available to keep these out of the landfill that are not currently addressed through the State law.

Not only did the committee spend time reviewing the computer issue, the further issue of State Surplus was addressed. This problem also exists with State Surplus on all other hard goods. An example of this is when the private sector or a school approaches the University to purchase or donate used equipment. This happens often but due to the stringent surplus laws, the University is not allowed to sell or donate this equipment directly. Even when the items have no value to the State for auction, items end up getting shipped to Salem and ultimately disposed.

#### STUDENT PARTICIPATION

The committee began the year by once again trying to ensure student representation and participation. The committee members worked directly with the ASUO executive to streamline the process to get students appointed as soon as the academic year began. Typically, the ASUO does not begin student recruiting for campus committees until October, making appointments in November. This has been a challenge for the life of the committee, as with this process students do not attend their first meeting until November or December. With this in mind, students end up jumping into the process after the work has begun.

In order to expedite this process, the ASUO worked to immediately screen and appoint students as they applied specifically to the Environmental Issues Committee.

The Presidents office also was very helpful in expediting the appointment process. Though it was successful in that we were able to get 7 students appointed to this committee early this year, unfortunately, only one of the students actually attended one meeting and then never returned. The appointed students were sent the minutes and offered an introductory email from the Chair. There was no response.

Having more student participation is an essential component of the committee's mission to educate the campus community.

#### COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The issue of appointments also carries over to the classified appointments. Often the classified appointments are not made until Fall term ends. The committee would greatly benefit from having all appointed members present to attend the first meeting in the beginning of Fall term.

#### COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

-Evaluate committee appointment process and work to create appointee involvement as follows:

- \*Work with the ASUO to streamline student appointment and participation process
- \*Work with Committee on Committees to ensure all faculty and staff appointments are made official prior to the start of Fall Term
- \*Establish participation criteria for committee members such as attendance at meetings, involvement in subcommittees and offer of assistance in lieu of scheduling conflicts with meetings.

-Appoint Facilities Energy Specialist as an ex-officio

-Continue budget support to the Environmental Studies Department for the Campus Environmental

Audit class at least annually. The Committee recommends that audits are done which will provide information for improvements in existing systems. The annual audit should be done systematically to provide a long term view of progress.

- Focus future environmental audit on student activity impact

- Support implementation and development of Transportation Resource Center

- Follow-up on the tech fee and free printing issue. Report back to committee on status of this issue.

Work towards an equitable arrangement to reduce the free unlimited printing.

- Work with State legislature to modify HB 2443 so that State Agencies can donate computer equipment to local entities including schools and non-profits to reduce cost to the University on the landfill while meeting State goals of waste reduction and recycling.

- Work with State legislature to broaden surplus dispensations so that any materials could be used or sold after the State rejects materials.

- Evaluate possibility of University expanding to create a surplus store and auction. Of note: Currently, just through the surplus furniture exchange at the University of Oregon, ~\$100,000 is saved annually from reuse and re-distribution of office furniture to departments. The savings is calculated based upon the replacement costs of items the University community takes from the exchange in lieu of purchasing new items.

- Continue to support the development and implementation of the Sustainable Development Guidelines. Create a mechanism for follow-through on these guidelines.

- Continue to fund and support the educational efforts of the Committee. Continue funding on the Emerald Ads, work with committee on additional promotion to increase the awareness of the campus community on all campus environmental issues, as per the recommendations from the Campus Environmental Audit Class.

- The committee also strongly recommends that it continues to be under the direction of the VP of Administration. The Faculty Senate approached the Committee and suggested that the committee serve under their jurisdiction. The committee rejected this proposal unanimously. In light of this, the committee recommends that a Faculty Senate representative be appointed to the committee as a Senate liaison.

## FUTURE GOALS

The Committee would like to thank Dan Williams, VP of Administration for his continued commitment to environmental issues and for support for the committee's work. The committee will focus on promotions and education in the coming year. This will include an assessment of the environmental impact of student activities.

The Committee would like to invite Dan Williams to review these recommendations and to meet with us to discuss these at one of the first meetings of next year.

It has been a pleasure for all of us to serve the University and the Administration in our important roles.  
It is an honor to be a part of this pro-active process.