

# ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

## 2000-2001 ANNUAL REPORT

### ISSUES FROM LAST YEAR

One of the EIC's concerns last year was the lack of student participation on the committee. The ASUO was very attentive to that concern this year, promptly appointing several students to the committee at the beginning of fall term. The student members were very active, with at least one attending every meeting. One or more students also served on the subcommittees on the web site and revision of the committee charge. Student input was also a valuable part of the suggestions made by the EIC to Facilities regarding energy conservation.

### CURRENT YEAR

The EIC initially dealt with the basic question of what the committee's emphasis should be for this year. Committee members concluded that we should focus on the education aspect of the EIC charge.

1. As a starting point we concentrated on the EIC web site, its content and layout. A subcommittee was formed to work with Robyn Hathcock, the EIC web master, on a new layout. The committee reviewed existing content, deleted some out-of-date material and reorganized other information. This initial modest project reappeared at the end of the year in a much more ambitious guise. A second goal of the new layout is to address accessibility issues for the EIC web page.

2. The committee met twice with Facilities Services representatives on the topic of energy conservation. The first, heavily attended, meeting was primarily an informational meeting with George Hecht and Amy Lake describing the nature and degree of the problem UO faces regarding energy costs. The number of people in attendance indicates the degree of interest this topic has on campus. George asked the committee for suggestions on how to convey information on this issue to the campus and encourage conservation. Some suggestions were provided at this initial meeting. A later meeting provided more suggestions, particularly with regard to involving students in this problem, and an offer to use the EIC web site as another means of communicating with the campus on these issues. The committee feels that this issue should continue to be addressed next year.

3. The EIC was asked by Nathan Tublitz to review its charge and submit it to the University Senate as part of a general restructuring of campus committees. A subcommittee was formed which revised the charge and submitted it to the committee as a whole. The committee reviewed the draft, made additional changes and finalized a new statement which was submitted to the Senate. The committee streamlined the language and allowed increased faculty representation while retaining the EIC's broad authorization to deal with campus environmental issues and the long-standing emphasis on education as a primary goal.

4. Jane Steckbeck, a UO staff member, raised with the committee concerns about the environmental impact of UO Catering's box lunches, the containers, materials used etc. Several members of the EIC volunteered to research the questions Jane raised and discover what other campuses were doing in this area. The committee subsequently met with Tom Driscoll and John Sargeant to discuss the issues. They had already met with Jane and started to research the options available. Recycled napkins, utensils and boxes were found to be fairly easy alternatives to what has been used. The question of recycling the boxes was more complicated because of concerns identified by Karyn Kaplan, Campus Recycling, regarding food contamination of recycled materials.

5. During the box lunch discussions it was brought out by several committee members that in talking to other universities and individuals nation-wide it was obvious that although UO is far ahead of many campuses we are not being recognized for the environmental issues that we address campus-wide on a daily basis. It was suggested that the EIC could help to address this lack of recognition, by using its web page to collect, summarize and "trumpet" the many ways in which UO is a national leader in addressing environmental issues. At UO there is no one person who is aware of all efforts and therefore many students, faculty and staff even on campus are unaware of how active and successful UO is in this area.

In order to do this effectively and quickly the EIC requested that you provide funding to hire a temporary employee to work this summer to collect this information from various campus units, summarize it in a concise and effective manner and posting it all to the EIC web page. This work can also be used to highlight the ways in which UO is addressing the governor's Executive Order on Sustainability. You approved that request and this project should begin sometime next week. The employee will report to Kay Coots. The EIC believes that this will be a cost effective way to improve awareness locally and nationally about UO's efforts to be environmentally responsible.

#### **ISSUES TO ADDRESS NEXT YEAR**

1. Continue to address recycling of box lunch boxes from UO catering with the object of resolving the problem of possible food contamination. It seems that the issue can be addressed with some further thought into a developing a different process for recycling the boxes and hopefully the EIC will continue to work with Food Services and Campus Recycling to solve this problem.

2. The EIC should continue to work with Facilities on the problem of reducing energy use on campus with education and communication.

3. Committee member Robyn Hathcock brought up a request by a faculty member that the memos sent to faculty regarding dead week be eliminated or reduced in number.