

# ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

## 2005-2006 ANNUAL REPORT

The Environmental Issues Committee met each month during this academic year and discussed many topics. Minutes were taken at all meetings and are housed online at <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~eic/>

### TOPICS

Herein is a brief overview of the topics we discussed. Greater depth of discussion will be found in the minutes.

**Talloires Declaration**-Dan Williams met with the committee last spring and indicated that the EIC would report to his predecessor in the fall. Our first order of business this year is to promote the signing of the Talloires Declaration to the UO administration.

**Smoking on campus as a public health risk**-committee member Paula Staight (Director, Health Promotion) asked the committee to work on education and awareness concerning smoking on campus. Some of the negative environmental impacts include the toxins in discarded cigarette butts, adverse health impacts include primary effects on smokers and known harms done to non-smokers from second hand smoke (including but not limited to, allergies, asthma, respiratory infections, lung cancer and heart disease) and tangentially, deforestation (as trees are being cut down just for the sole purpose of drying the tobacco leaves). Part of the solution is to provide more education and cessation assistance. Jim Blick (Assistant Registrar) recommended that the EIC have a broader discussion about the benefits of developing a smoke free campus. The committee feels that a smoke-free campus would be a good marketing tool for the recruitment of new students.

**Pesticide use on campus**-committee member James Blick suggested that the committee discuss pesticide use on campus with the idea of creating pesticide free zones.

**Computer use and energy conservation**- Jim Blick also recommended that e-mail reminders about energy conservation be re-instituted.

**CASL (Center for the Advancement of Sustainable Living) and Green Dorm Room project**-CASL continues to search for permanent housing. The Student Service Learning Program will consider the green dorm room for one of their projects next year.

**Recycled paper policy**- The committee noted that the correct "revised paper policy" is now displayed on the University of Oregon administrative www page (<http://policies.uoregon.edu/ch4k.html>).

**New Chairperson**- By unanimous vote, Jim Blick was elected to the chair of the Environmental Issues Committee for the term of one year.

## **GUESTS**

### **Frances Dyke, Vice President for Finance and Administration**

On January 20, 2006 Frances Dyke attended our regular committee meeting and urged the committee to look into these four topics (and here it will be noted that some of these topics were already being discussed in committee).

- A. Pesticide application and whether changes are needed to this program
- B. Utilizing Bring Recycling to recover material from demolition projects
- C. Creating a demonstration green dorm room and outfitting it with high efficiency appliances, lighting, and other sustainable materials.
- D. Smoking on campus, environmental health impacts.

### **Tim King and Mark Maguire**

Tim King (Exterior Team Supervisor for Facilities Services) and Mark Maguire (Occupational Safety Officer/Contract Administrator). The committee reviewed the written Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program and a list of approved treatment procedures.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Talloires Declaration**

The Environmental Issues Committee once again respectfully advises University of Oregon President David Frohnmayer to sign the Talloires Declaration. The committee began review of the Talloires Declaration at the advice of Dan Williams in fall, 2001. The committee recommended signing the declaration at the end of the 2005/05 academic year. As of March, 2006, over 320 colleges and universities worldwide have signed this declaration, including Brown University, Oberlin College, Macalester College, Rutgers University, Tufts University, the University of Arizona, the University of Albany, (SUNY, Albany, New York), the University of California (Santa Barbara, California), University of Colorado at Boulder, Colorado, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Hawaii, University of Idaho, University of Massachusetts at Boston, University of Montana, University of Nevada, University of New Hampshire, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Northern Iowa, University of Pittsburgh, University of Puget Sound, University of Rhode Island, University of Richmond, Virginia, University of Southern Maine, and the University of Virginia.

### **Vinyl**

The Environmental Issues Committee recommends that the new construction projects at UO entirely eliminate or substantially avoid the use of vinyl products wherever possible. It is especially important to incorporate this philosophy as new building projects and renovations develop. The committee sent a letter with this specific recommendation to the office of Frances Dyke with the understanding that the memorandum would be forwarded to the Campus Planning Committee and all building committees.

Furthermore, the Environmental Issues Committee also suggested that representatives from Oregon Toxics Alliance meet with the various development/design committees to promote awareness of the dangers that vinyl poses and to suggest alternatives.

### **Basketball Arena/Public-Private Construction Projects**

The construction of a new basketball arena presents the University with the dual opportunity to both create a world-class sports facility and support sustainability. The State of Oregon has mandated that construction of all new state buildings "meet, at a minimum, the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design ("LEED") program's silver equivalency status" (Executive Order No. 06-02). Therefore, in keeping with the spirit of the mandate as well as the letter we recommend that the university ensure that the privately funded construction of this (and all future) state building(s) fully comply with this mandate. In addition, we recommend that its design and construction adhere to the University's Sustainable Development Plan.

### **Integrated Pest Management**

The committee recommends increasing the use of manual control for weed and noxious vegetation removal wherever possible as a less harmful alternative to pesticide application. This will undoubtedly require an increased level of financial support from the University.

The committee recommends 24 hours advance notification to the public-at-large wherever there are pesticide applications in highly trafficked areas.

The committee recommends alternative methods of pesticide control including the use of goats to chew down invasive blackberries on hillsides along the Willamette River or use vacuums to control wasps. The method of using goats is already in use by Eugene Water and Electric board along the McKenzie river canal, and it is in use by many other municipalities across the country.

The committee recommends the increased, intentional use of more native species, fewer annuals, and encourages greater under-story plant growth in landscaping to cut down on the need for extra watering and maintenance.

The committee urges auxiliary departments with large landscaping needs that somehow fall outside their purview (for example, University Athletics) to model the practices exemplified by Tim King and Mark Maguire

Finally, we suggest the use of low-noise alternatives to current leaf blowers in some areas to cut down on ambient noise pollution. Possibilities include quieter gas or electric blowers, as well as rakes.

### **Bring Recycling**

The committee acknowledges that Bring Recycling is currently involved in recovering and recycling materials from the university's demolition projects. The committee recommends that the continued

use of Bring Recycling be specifically included in the new Facilities Services construction demolition procedures document.

### **Reduction of paper waste**

The committee recommends a reduction unnecessary paper usage in all departments, especially transcripts that may be used in academic advising.

### **Feedback from Administration to Committees**

Each year the committee makes recommendations, and the committee noted that sometimes these recommendations are repeated from year to year. The committee wishes to develop a feedback method so the flow of information goes both up and down the chain of command. This way the committee members will know if more action is needed to move recommendations forward, or if decisions have been made to either follow or not follow the recommendations.

**CASL (Center for the Advancement of Sustainable Living)** -CASL continues to search for permanent housing. The committee has endorsed this idea and urges the UO administration to work with the space committee and find a home for this program.

### **Tobacco use on campus**

The committee had several discussions about environmental tobacco smoke on campus, formed a subcommittee and developed a report on several aspects of this issue. The full report is attached this end of year report. Herein are our recommendations:

**Establish a consistent 25 foot rule around the perimeter of all university buildings banning smoking.** This would mirror the City of Eugene's ban, which would lead to less confusion especially as we look to building more public buildings on campus such as the basketball arena. Consistency among buildings on the campus would increase compliance by eliminating confusion as to which distance for which buildings. This would also eliminate smoking in very visible places such as the balcony in Oregon Hall. As our admissions building it behooves us to present and mirror healthy behaviors.

**Eliminate the current designated smoking entrance to buildings.** Designated smoking entrances negatively impact indoor air quality and negatively impact people who enter or exit the building at this doorway.

**Eliminate signage on all benches that state, "Smoking Area".** This would help eliminate not only the perception that smoking is widespread on this campus but would ideally lessen the exposure to environmental tobacco smoke by not congregating smokers together especially along major walkways. These benches would not be necessary if smoking is pushed 25 feet away from buildings. A third benefit would include the elimination of the tacit endorsement of smoking on campus.

**Move benches that were put in specifically for smoking to areas that are not along major walkways.** This would include moving the butt receptacles in some instances. The purpose again would be to decrease exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.

**Update the University's OAR on smoking to reflect changes.**

**Include smoking policies in literature given out to all new students, faculty and staff.**

Emphasis that the UO is taking steps to eliminate ETS on our campus because we care about the health of our students, faculty, staff and visitors.

**Include cessation opportunities for students, faculty and staff for new hires and new students.** PEBB offers, FREE to all PEBB members, access to the Free and Clear Quit for Life Program. This provides cessation support and free nicotine replacement products (also free to family members). The Health Education Department works with students to provide cessation support. We have free nicotine replacement products (NRT) as supplies last and low-cost NRT in our pharmacy.

**Develop a decision making process that allows for multiple avenues of input prior to enacting changes on this campus that impact the environment.** In order to prevent one campus group from making policy decisions on their own we recommend that policies that impact the campus environment be brought before the EIC for consideration and input from multiple departments.

**Work with students to determine the support and feasibility of moving towards a smoke free campus.** Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis will be one of the first large urban universities to ban the use or sale of all tobacco products when the entire IUPUI campus goes "Tobacco Free" this fall (see article at <http://www.iupui.edu/~nosmoke/> ).

Nationwide, many universities are setting precedents for entirely smoke free campuses: (<http://www.no-smoke.org/pdf/smokefreecollegesuniversities.pdf> )

Respectfully submitted by,  
Ben Farrell, Chairperson UO Environmental Issues Committee  
July 3, 2006