

Environmental Issues Committee 2010 Annual Report

The University of Oregon Environmental Issues Committee (EIC) is a working group of faculty, staff and students that serves to identify and raise awareness of environmental problems and concerns on campus and recommend University policy to address these concerns. This year has seen the EIC address several issues and provide recommendations, as follows:

We took up the voting status of ex-officio committee members and reconfirmed that status to be non-voting.

We conducted a final review of the DRAFT Climate Action Plan and then formally endorsed the plan in a letter to President Lariviere (see Appendix A), with the following recommendations:

1. More aggressive emissions goals
2. More emphasis on behavior, education and personal responsibility
3. More aggressive approach to reduce air travel emissions
4. Establishment of a Student Green Fund
5. More concrete commitment to investment and implementation.

We requested that the Sustainability Office create a ten-minute powerpoint presentation to facilitate sharing of the plan, which was done.

We reaffirmed our support for and urged adoption of a Campus Idling Policy, including the creation of educational materials for the campus community.

We began reviews of the University's Comprehensive Environmental Policy and its Sustainable Development Plan. These remain issues for next year's EIC, in response to upcoming reports from Steve Mital and Campus Planning, respectively.

We considered the issue of continued development of the Riverfront Research Park under its existing Master Plan. Based upon the University's Environmental Policy Statement and the increasing importance of protecting river resources, the Environmental Issues Committee (by a unanimous vote of the voting members present, not all EIC members) asked that the University administration initiate a public review of the Riverfront Research Park Master Plan prior to any development proceeding north of the railroad tracks along the banks of the Willamette River in the Riverfront Research Park. We did not receive an acknowledgement of our letter, which we attach here (Appendix B).

We requested that the Jacqua Center comply with University norms and install recycling infrastructure. In May, 2010, Bob Beals, Associate Athletic Director for Operations and Events, indicated that recycling had been fully implemented.

We had Cathy Susman, Purchasing and Contracting Director, come to discuss her office's efforts to green and track procurement. As a result (and after additional analysis of procurement data), the EIC agreed to review and update the Paper purchasing policy this year and draft Green Cleaning Supplies policy with Bill Kasper

next year. The Recycle Paper Policy was reviewed, including a presentation by Mark Dixon from Printing and Mailing services. We considered several draft revisions and a final draft of proposed revision to the policy is attached (Appendix C).

Three members of the EIC conducted a site visit to Cascade Sierra Solutions (CSS) in Coburg. CSS had received \$7000 in carbon offset funding, the first allocated by the University of Oregon, from the EMU to offset their annual emissions. CSS has as their goals to educate truckers about what they can do to be more efficient and to provide access to products that can reduce their carbon footprint. Cascade Sierra Solutions works with an EPA program called Smart Way Transport Partnership, which is like a LEED certification for trucking.

Looking toward implementation of the now-adopted Climate Action Plan, we decided to address University-related travel, which accounts for over 30% of campus emissions. We discussed with Rich Linton the need to better monitor research related travel (see EIC letter, Appendix D); he committed ORSA to addressing this accounting need. Rich also supported an effort by the Sustainability Council urging NSF to consider ways how carbon offsets for research travel emissions can be addressed in grant funding. We also met with Lorraine Davis, Acting Athletic Director, to discuss the impacts of athletics-related travel, estimated to be about 25% of overall UO travel. She agreed to take the issue and possible actions to her staff, including better accounting of athletics travel and other infrastructure efficiencies as first steps toward possible creation of a carbon-neutral athletic program.

As can be seen, the EIC continues to take its charge seriously and work with the administration to improve the University of Oregon's environmental policies and practices.

Sincerely,

Arthur Farley, EIC Chair

Appendix A: Draft Climate Action Plan Comments

1 December 2009

Draft Climate Action Plan Comments Environmental Issues Committee

The University of Oregon Environmental Issues Committee (EIC) is an appointed group of faculty, staff and students that serves to raise awareness about environmental issues on campus, to identify associated problems and propose solutions, and to recommend University policy on environmental issues. In 2007, then President Frohnmayer signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), committing the University of Oregon to be part of an effort by higher education institutions to address global warming by neutralizing their greenhouse gas emissions and accelerating research and educational efforts to help re-stabilize the earth's climate. As part of this commitment, the University of Oregon agreed to develop a Climate Action Plan. The EIC has spent much of its time and effort over the past two years making recommendations toward a draft of the University of Oregon's Climate Action Plan.

At its November 23, 2009 meeting, the EIC voted unanimously to endorse the general contents of the draft Climate Action Plan with the following, specific recommendations for improvement:

1. Establish more aggressive interim emissions reduction goals in keeping with Climate Action Plans produced at other universities;
2. Place more emphasis on behavior, education, and personal responsibility, thereby going beyond institutional commitments to involve all elements of the university community;
3. Institute an aggressive program to reduce air travel emissions directly related to University activity, as they constitute a significant percentage of our carbon emissions;
4. Establish a Student Green Fund that allows students to contribute directly to worthwhile local projects reducing carbon emissions, as exist at other universities; and
5. Make concrete commitments to emissions measurement, plan implementation, and sustainable investment.

With these proposed improvements, the Environmental Issues Committee believes the University of Oregon can maintain its leadership role in sustainable higher education and continue to be a model for what can be done when commitments are made to reduce the environmental impacts of higher education.

Appendix B: EIC Letter Regarding Riverfront Research Park

1 February 2010

To: Frances Dyke, Vice President for Finance and Administration
From: Environmental Issues Committee, Art Farley, Chair
Subject: Riverfront Research Park Master Plan Review

At its January, 2010 meeting, the Environmental Issues Committee considered the issue of continued development of the Riverfront Research Park under its existing Master Plan. Since any development along the Willamette River could have significant environmental impacts, the Committee deemed the issue to be within its purview.

The Riverfront Research Park Master Plan was adopted in 1989. A Conditional Use Permit for development under the plan was approved by the City of Eugene at that time. The plan was controversial, especially those elements of the plan that called for development along the banks of the Willamette River, due to potential environmental impacts.

A review of the Master Plan was conducted in 1998 and the Review Committee's Final Report (see <http://www.uoregon.edu/~uosenate/dirsen989/FinalReport.html>) suggested establishing greater setbacks from the river than those that were initially adopted. The committee also suggested that there be faculty/administration review of the Master Plan every five years. Unfortunately, no review has been conducted since then.

In 1997 the University adopted a broad ranging Environmental Policy Statement (see <http://policies.uoregon.edu/ch4i.html>). As prolog, the policy states that "to maintain the campus effectively while also working to preserve the rights of future generations, the University affirms its commitment to environmental excellence and actively promotes the public's right to a healthy, quality environment." This policy statement was adopted after the Master Plan's adoption. As such, the Master Plan has not been reviewed specifically according to this policy statement.

Given the above history and the ever increasing importance of protecting river resources, the Environmental Issues Committee (by a unanimous vote of those present) asks that the University administration initiate a public review of the Riverfront Research Park Master Plan prior to allowing any development to proceed north of the railroad tracks along the banks of the Willamette River in the Riverfront Research Park.

cc. President Lariviere
University Senate
ASUO Student Senate

Appendix C: DRAFT Revised Recycled Paper Policy

Purpose: This policy coordinates university use of recycled paper with statewide executive orders.

Policy: The University of Oregon's recycled paper policy requires the purchase and use of recycled paper products in accordance with Executive Orders EO-98-07 and EO-00-07. The purchasing of paper made with 100% post-consumer waste (PCW) – which is compatible with all copiers purchased through the State of Oregon contract – is encouraged. Every effort should be made to eliminate excessive or unnecessary paper use including electronic mail or other paperless communication, double-sided copying and printing, and reduced printer margin defaults. Use of heavily dyed and neon papers is discouraged since its production uses hazardous chemicals and its disposal requires special recycling procedures.

At a minimum, the University of Oregon policy requires the following:

- Paper products purchased and used by UO staff must be made from minimum 30% post-consumer waste.
- Paper must be sourced from mills using elemental chlorine free (ECF) processes
- University of Oregon requests for bids or quotes for purchase of paper products, including authorized printing from outside vendors, shall include a solicitation of bids or quotes for recycled paper and papers that have not been bleached with elemental chlorine or other hazardous materials.
- Bid specification shall not exclude the use of recycled paper or tree-free products.
- The default for all university office equipment that use paper such as copiers, printers and fax machines, shall be set to comply with this policy (minimum 30% PCW and ECF process).

Staff may purchase paper containing less than 30% PCW only when such PCW paper (a) can not be found to satisfy printer/copiers not purchased under current state contract, (b) is not available in the desired quantity, (c) is not available within a reasonable period of time, or (d) is not priced competitively. **Whenever 100% virgin paper is required due to printer/copier specifications, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified paper is required.** We anticipate that as university printers and copiers are replaced, printer/copiers that require 100% virgin paper will be phased out.

Unless otherwise specified, University Printing and Mailing Services will provide and use elemental chlorine-free (ECF) recycled paper with 100% post-consumer content. In support of this policy Printing and Mailing Services shall:

- Provide up-to-date information about state contract printer/copier specifications, chlorine use, recycled paper availability, and pricing information on its website to assist staff with paper purchasing decisions.
- Educate the University community about this policy
- Review and recommend updates to this policy periodically to ensure it meets all applicable standards

Appendix D: University Actions to Address Research-related Greenhouse Gas Emissions

16 April 2010

Memorandum

To: Richard Linton, Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies

From: Art Farley, Chair of the Environmental Issues Committee (EIC)

Subject: University Actions to Address Research-related Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In 2007, President Frohnmayer signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), committing the University of Oregon to be part of an effort by higher education institutions to address global warming by neutralizing their greenhouse gas emissions and accelerating research and educational efforts to help re-stabilize the earth's climate. As part of this commitment, the University of Oregon agreed to complete a Climate Action Plan (CAP), which plan has recently been finalized and approved.

One result of completing the CAP has been the realization that university-related air travel accounts for over 30% of our current emissions. Our current accounting methods do not categorize travel expenditures (used as basis to compute emissions) as to generating activity, such as athletic, administrative or research purposes. This brings us to our first request for action:

(1) We request that you request ORSA to begin tracking the amount of research grant funds that are allocated to research-related air travel.

Tracking these figures would allow us to better formulate actions needed to reduce or offset research-related greenhouse gas emissions. Since presenting the CAP, faculty have expressed interest and concern regarding the extent of University carbon emissions that are travel-related. Categorizing and presenting these figures would be a start toward finding solutions. As we find out more about research impacts, we can move to reduce travel as best as possible through support for virtual meetings and other technologies. Some travel will still be valuable for research communication. Greenhouse gas emissions associated with his travel could be offset, bringing us to our second request for action:

(2) We request that you request the Sustainability Council, headed by Brendan Bohannon, to communicate with the National Science Foundation and encourage the agency to allow funds to be included in grant expenditures to offset carbon emissions from proposed travel. Based on that outcome of that discussion, we request that the University Administration be willing to write a letter supporting the inclusion of allowances for carbon offsets in grant budgets.

These actions will not directly reduce University emissions but will set us on a course toward addressing them in the future. If we eventually set up a campus-wide travel carbon-offset fund, with contributions from athletics, administration, and research, we would be able to address greenhouse gas impacts that remain after making possible reductions in travel.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests.