

By joining forces with the city of Eugene, Curry says the University may be able to circumvent that catch.

Recently, Richard Hersh, University vice provost for research, accepted a seat on Eugene's Joint Council on Economic Development, giving the University a valuable voice in city policy. The council currently is working on a marketing proposal designed to entice light industry and high-tech corporations into the Eugene community.

Economics Prof. Ed Whitelaw, using a research grant, is conducting marketing surveys that will be used by the council. Bill Winters of the journalism school is working on the publicity aspects of the marketing campaign.

Meanwhile, the city's Business Assistance Team is working with University business and administration classes to come up with ways to increase local profits.

"It's a handoff kind of relationship," Long says. "The University's participation has been very important."

Other efforts to bring the University closer to the community include a series of tours hosted by Curry and other University brass. City and county government leaders, state legislators and other local influentials are paraded before the University's technological research institutes in the molecular biology, chemical physics and geothermal fields.

Some of them understand what they see, some don't, but all are impressed by what they are shown.

It's too early to predict whether the current cooperation between the University and the city will pay off, Long says.

"I can only say this: Those communities that are similar to Eugene have organized in much the same way and have been successful."

The connection between the University and the city is not strictly economic. And it has not always been quite so amiable.



Charlene Curry

Photo by Dave Kao

Long, who started working for the city while he was still a graduate student, remembers one of the more intense confrontations between the city and the school.

It was the spring of 1970, Long's first week on the job. The city police department had just received word that student protesters had blocked the 13th Avenue entrance to the University with bricks and had renamed it "People's Street."

Long remembers former Mayor Les Anderson telling the city manager, "There's an easy way to solve this thing, and there's a complex way." The easy way would involve force

"and there'd be some blood in the streets," he remembers Anderson saying. The complex way would take some time.

The city opted for complexity. Phone lines were established between students and police. As police pulled back and student demands were met or compromised, bricks were removed. Thirteenth Avenue was eventually closed to traffic.

Cooperation like that helped prevent the deep rifts between the University and the community that occurred in other university cities, Long says.

The result, he says, is an "intensively productive relationship — a very positive one."

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