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Sprinklers keep lawns and students wet

By Hy Rosario
Emerald Contributor

Only in Eugene. The temperature hovers over 100 degrees, the skies are blue and sunny ... and students are getting rained on.

In this case however, the rain is artificial. Across campus lawns, there are sprinklers watering the students, sidewalks and occasional patches of grass. There are soaker hoses, bayonets, one eyes, and rain bird sprinklers — all water spouting devices — keeping Ducks wet and University grounds looking emerald green.

Summer students find themselves hav-

ing to hop, skip and jump to stay dry. Some find sprinklers menacing.

"They're on all the time, and I get sick and tired of having to walk around sprinklers to avoid getting wet," said Chanel DeLaney, a senior in political science.

Who is it that is responsible for turning those sprinklers on and off? Some postulate that sprinkler elves are behind it all, because no one ever sees humans out there. Others assume that it is all automatic.

The truth is, the University Physical Plant is responsible. Ted Burns, assistant director for plant services, was to quick to point out that 21 individuals share the blame in the business of irrigation.

Physical Plant divides the campus into four strategic areas. Burns said that the crews are responsible for every patch of green earth on this campus except Hayward Field, Howe Field and the practice field at Autzen Stadium.

Dean Bobbitt, a 10-year physical plant veteran, leads the five members of Area B. Area B is the southwestern corner of campus.

Bobbitt said that the amount of equipment needed for irrigation is staggering. It takes two to three days just to get the equipment out of storage, Bobbitt said.

The distinctive chuk-chuk-chuk of the sprinklers can be heard from early May through the end of September.

Kathryn Richman, an area B summer crew member, finds working 10 hour days a challenge.

"Sometimes it's kind of tough to get to work at six o'clock in the morning so that you can get sprayed in the face with water," Richman said.

Complaints from water-drenched students are not unusual, but the variety is amusing. Burns said he receives complaints ranging from too much water to not having enough. Usually the crews try to water a given area at least three to four hours a day.

Using what is known as quick-coupler sprinklers, the kind seen spouting water without hoses attached, there is a great deal of backslash and overlapping. This has led to complaints, on occasion, from professors about water coming in through windows

during classes, Burns said.

Richman admits she has been accused of watering the sidewalk more than the grass. She said that the crews are very conscious about that, but can't fight the winds that usually cause sidewalk watering to occur.

"We try to keep the sidewalks clear, or at least leave an alternate route for students to use," Bobbitt said.

Since the crews only work four days a week, it is imperative that the greens are watered as much as possible on those days.

This, to the dismay of students, happens to be Monday through Thursday. The grounds are not watered on days when mowing is needed.

'They're on all the time, and I get sick and tired of having to walk around sprinklers to avoid getting wet.'
— Chanel DeLaney

None of these inconveniences would be needed if the University were irrigated automatically. But according to Burns, only a mere 25 percent of campus set up that way. These areas are usually on timers and can be turned on during the night.

A shortage of funds, not water, is what prevents the entire campus from going automatic. Assuming that all the Univer-

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