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## Officials respond to Riverfront waste information Williams counters critics' accusations

By Chris Bouneff  
Emerald Associate Editor

If Dan Williams had it all to do over again, he wouldn't change a thing.

Williams, University vice president for administration, is at the forefront of the controversy over the presence of chemical wastes at the Riverfront Research Park site.

He is currently being criticized for withholding information about the dumping that he learned about in 1985, and he has even been accused of lying about what he knew, when he knew it and why he did not disclose the presence of chemicals on the site.

Opponents of the research park said Williams withheld the information to guarantee approval of the city-issued conditional use permit, which is needed before development begins.

However, the release of 1,500 research park documents in response to an open records request disproved the notion that Williams deliberately withheld information to ensure the project's success.

"I don't think what's gone on so far has been a detriment

to the project," Williams said during an interview Friday. "From my point of view, it's given those people who oppose the park one more opportunity to make us look bad."

In November, Williams called a last-minute press conference in order to circumvent a news article appearing the next day that would have disclosed the presence of chemical wastes.

Since that time, Williams has been the target of park opponents and environmentalists.

Williams said he planned on releasing the information this spring, once a site assessment was completed by the engineering firm hired by the University to do the study.

He knew he was taking a risk in following this path, but he said it was worth the try.

"It was my preference not to talk about a problem unless we knew whether we had a problem or not," Williams said.

"The only way for this not to be a headache is to talk about the report once its done," he said.

Williams said he determined that the materials



Dan Williams

dumped on the site were relatively harmless, and after 20 years there was no reason to act urgently.

"The only reason to sit on this issue for three years is that I believe that there is no danger out there," he said. "If I had found out there was hazardous waste, I would have taken a different position."

The only "smoking gun" found in an inspection of the documents was a memo dated Jan. 16 from Peter Swan, legal adviser to President Myles Brand, to the Department of Environmental Quality.

In the letter, Swan wrote that the estimated amount of

## Plans for park continue despite toxic dumping

By Hon Walker  
Emerald Associate Editor

Despite continued questions and controversy after the release of public documents regarding toxic dumping near the Willamette River, project representatives maintain that the Riverfront Research Park is proceeding on schedule.

More than 1,500 pages of documents were gathered by University officials and released March 20 in response to a public records request for information regarding waste disposal at the park site.

A review of the documents last week by the *Emerald* failed to uncover evidence of previously undisclosed problems with hazardous wastes at the site.

During the late 1960s and early '70s, chemicals and other wastes from University laboratories were buried on the south bank of the Willamette River, the planned site for the research park.

An Aug. 26, 1985 memo to Oakley V. Glenn, University director of public safety, from Tom Hicks, environmental specialist, said:

"A very rough estimate of quantities is 50 gallons per hole, or 200 to 300 gallons total," for the four to six holes dug, according to the 1985 memo.

In addition, "I am concerned that, if during any future excavation on the site, one of the holes is uncovered, a serious delay in the construction schedule would result."

A more recent document, however, indicated a higher estimate of the amount of waste at the site.

"Such deposits were not illegal when made and, of course, no records were required to be kept. Working from people's best recollections" in 1989, it now appears that the actual quantity was more likely around 1,000 gallons," according to a Jan. 16 letter from Peter Swan, legal assistant to President Myles Brand, to the state Department of Environmental Quality.

In an Aug. 28, 1985 memo to Muriel Jackson, assistant vice

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## High contractor bids hinder construction

By Alice Thornton  
Emerald Reporter

A high bid from building contractors has caused University Housing to reconsider its plans to remodel the Hamilton dormitory cafeteria this term.

The \$1.4 million facelift, originally planned for completion in September, has been postponed indefinitely while the housing department reorganizes the project. Hamilton cafeteria will remain open during spring term.

Fred Babcock, director of food services for University Housing, said the decision to cancel the project a few weeks ago.

"We had some unexpected events that were beyond our control which is why we postponed the project," Babcock said. "We're in the preliminary stages of planning a future remodel."

The project was bonded for a specified amount of money, he said. The bid received amounted to more than the budget could handle.

Fred Tepfer, a planning associate in the University planning

office, said the bid was 35 to 40 percent over the budget.

"We're doing what we can to reduce the cost of the project and increase the funding," Tepfer said.

The remodeling would have expanded the kitchen and serving area and added several new entrances to the cafeteria.

"The current serving area is a dinosaur," Tepfer said. "It's really inefficient and that costs money."

The project received only one bid from a building contractor. Tepfer said a project of this size usually requires at least three bids.

The construction market in Eugene is currently very busy which accounted for the lack of bids on the project, he said.

"There's an awful lot of construction activities going on in Eugene at this time," Tepfer said.

The pressure to keep noise levels low and the difficulty of working in an existing space also kept contractors from bidding on the project, Tepfer said.

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### Blind faith

Students work on clay models while wearing blindfolds and listening to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Pat Picciani's Architecture 282 studio. The exercise is designed to promote an awareness of acoustics in architecture.

Photo by Andre Ranieri