



Maze o' bikes

Tei Gordon retrieves his bicycle from the plethora of velocipedes in front of Condon Hall.

Photo by Andre Ranieri

University to rethink curriculum

By Jason Keuter
Emerald Contributor

The University needs to reassess its undergraduate curriculum in order to better prepare students for the 21st-century work force, said Gerald Kissler, senior vice provost for planning and resources.

"Students going to the University of Oregon now will spend most of their working lives in the 21st century," he said. "They will need skills they now have difficulty developing within our current undergraduate system."

Kissler said problem-solving, reasoning, and analytical and communication skills will be the abilities a student who wants to succeed in the job market will need.

"If they have these general skills," he said, "they will be better prepared to meet a wide array of workplace challenges."

Today's students will be changing jobs frequently throughout their lives, which means they will need general

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Atypical weather may hint at global warming

By Rene DeCair
Emerald Associate Editor

Rain-drenched Oregonians who dream of trading in their rubber shoes for swim wear to live in a warm, desert-like environment may get their wish if global warming continues, said several area climate experts.

But University chemistry professor and greenhouse effect expert, Paul Engelking, said the catch is that people will not have to move out of the state to experience the weather changes.

"If you wanted to live in California but didn't want to move there, this is a wonderful opportunity," he said of the increase in global warming.

Several climatologists and meteorologists offered theories earlier this week as to what is causing the state's recent erratic weather patterns. They also offered predictions about what kind of weather people can expect in the future.

Rick Holtz, meteorologist for the National Weather Service, said the recent warm temperatures caused by a ridge of high pressure in the area have given way to another system. The new system is creating temperatures below the area's average of 59 degrees for this time of year.

The daily lows forecast for the next few days are expected to go below the freezing point. Holtz said what is causing the strange hot and cold spells — which are far from normal — is anybody's guess.



Photo by Andre Ranieri

Experts say Oregon's cool fall temperatures could become a thing of the past if the greenhouse effect continues to escalate.

"Nobody has the answer," he said. "There are a lot of theories flying around all the time. It's not an exact science."

Engelking and David Greenland, University climatologist and geography professor, said they would not rule out the greenhouse effect as a contributing factor to the unusual weather. However, both men said they could not positively say it was causing the weather irregularities.

Greenland said one possibility is that the northern hemisphere seems to be moving toward more weather variability. He said this may be a result of the changes in the ocean temperatures.

The El Nino effect, which occurs when warm water goes from the western Pacific Ocean to the eastern Pacific Ocean,

produces abnormal atmospheric effects.

Trade winds are related to the warm water, he said. And although the flow of water happens every four to seven years, it is not a regular pattern and lasts for about a year.

But the difficulty with figuring out the pattern, Greenland said, is that it is a "chicken-and-egg problem in that you can't say one thing causes the other" — if the atmospheric air causes ocean temperature changes or if it is the other way around.

Regarding the greenhouse effect theory to explain weather, both Engelking and Greenland said that has always been what is now called a greenhouse effect.

But, they note, it is now enhanced by atmospheric gases,

including methane, chlorofluorocarbons and carbon dioxide, which are being released into the atmosphere primarily as a result of human activities.

Engelking predicts that worldwide temperatures will increase an average of three degrees Celsius by the middle of the next century if fossil fuels continue to be used at the rate they are.

"That's the difference between wearing a sweater in your house at 65 degrees and taking it off at 70 degrees," Engelking said.

He said the real worry of global warming is not so much that the ice caps will melt as has been widely reported, but that the oceans will expand like fluid in a thermometer.

Humans will adapt to the weather, but other things in the environment, such as animal and plant life will not adapt so easily, he said.

Engelking said that people should be aware that there is a price for using fossil fuels that will eventually lead to permanent climatic changes.

The government's response to scientists' warnings of the greenhouse effect is a "more sophisticated brush-off" than it was during the Reagan Administration, Engelking said. Then, scientists were told by the Energy Department not to "breathe a word" to the public about a report released recommending alternative energy sources, he said.

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Briefly

The Eugene Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild has released a statement condemning the proposed Oregon Citizens Alliance amendment to the state constitution, saying the amendment is discriminatory.

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Peace

Israelis and Arabs delegates met in Madrid Wednesday in historic talks aimed at ending more than 40 years of strife in the Middle East.

Elsewhere, radicals on both sides condemned the peace talks, with one Iranian Parliament member calling for the assassination of all participants.

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Civil rights

The Senate overwhelmingly approved a major civil rights bill Wednesday which would expand the legal rights of sexual discrimination victims.

President Bush has indicated he will sign the bill, ending two years of haggling between the administration and Congress.

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