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Business school lacking environmental emphasis

A survey finds too few environmentally oriented courses within the school

By Serena Markstrom Oregon Daily Emerald

Across the nation, colleges and universities are adapting their business management curricula to keep up with environmental concerns - the University is not one of them.

According to a recent survey, "Beyond Gray Pin Stripes," conducted by the World Resource Institute, the University's business school does not rank among the top schools in incorporating business environment themes into its

Though the Charles H. Lundquist College of Business offers courses that touch on environmental themes, there is not yet a strong emphasis on the environment in undergraduate or master's programs in the college. The business school received just one of a possible five stars in student course work, according to the sur-

Mike Russo, a University busi-ness professor who will teach business social responsibility this spring, said there are a number of ways students and faculty get involved with learning and teaching the practices of sustainable development, but he says he would like to see more.

"There's always room to do more," Russo said.

A summary submitted to the WRI by the business school said that by fall 2000 new minors will be added in environmental studies and business. The minor in environmental studies is designed for business majors, and the one in business is designed for environmental studies majors. The University earned all five stars in institutional support of environmental activities, which includes some extra-curricular business school programs and courses offered in other departments.

Environmental themes should be taught in business classes, Russo said, but it is not a widely held belief among students that they should be.

Russo said he would like to see students come out of their undergraduate educations with some concept of why it is important to learn about how business affects the environment and what they can do about it.

"I would like to see students who get a business degree, at any level, to gain an appreciation of environmental stewardship and its absolute importance for the management of an organization," Russo said.

Jereme Grzybowski, a senior majoring in political science and minoring in business, believes that though incorporating environmental themes into business curricula would help, the real damage to the environment is done by large corporations. Grzy-bowski, who is involved with OS-PIRG, said small businesses can make a difference, but special interests drive the economy.

"The environment is something all students should keep in mind," Grzybowski said, though he says he doesn't believe such classes should be mandatory.

The small number of classes available in the business curricu-

is offset by student activity. Alison Wise is a master's student in business administration who cochaired the committee that organized the third annual Sustainable Business Symposium this fall along with Damien Francaviglia.

Wise is optimistic that businesses will adopt sustainable practices because, she said, "it's not only good for the environment, it's good for the bottom

The shift from blindly extracting natural resources to a more service-based economy is imminent, Wise believes. She said what is happening now is analogous to the industrial revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in that it will change how business is done.

Because the next industrial revolution is so tied to the environment, Wise thinks the University is in an ideal location to be more visibly supportive of new ways of doing business.

"I think it would be great if the UO business school could pio-neer this next revolution," Wise said. Wise has found it is difficult to convey why environmental conservation is important right now. "The one thing you can't argue with is that we are limited by our resources," Wise said.

Wise is also involved with a student group called "Plant the Seed," which has distributed 75 copies of the book "The Ecology of Commerce — a declaration of sustainability," by Paul Hawken, to businesses. The book details ways in which businesses can feasibly change their ways and be more environmentally conscious.

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Senate debate

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ideas for change.

Only eight of the 28 students running for a position appeared, with one showing up toward the end of the meeting.

In a debate moderated by ASUO Vice President Mitra Anoushiravani, the candidates were asked questions developed by current stu-dent senators as well as inquiries from the audience. The concerns expressed by the candidates appeared straight across the board, with the most common including knowledge of the incidental fee and

Student Senate visibility. Freshman Jesse Harding, a sociology and journalism major, saw a lot of apathy from students directed at the student government and pledged to make the senate a more integral part of the University community.

"I think that it's just shameless that our campus can't take that need and desire to act and apply it to Student Senate."

Continuing this idea, Jeff Oliver, a sophomore journalism and political science major running for one of the finance chairs, said he believes the student government is participating in a lot of good actions but they are often overshadowed by negative press.

"The ASUO, the things they're doing ... [are] not being seen. The negative stuff is seen.'

Jennifer Greenough, a sophomore political science major, suggested her way of getting around the elusive perception of the senate by getting out and talking to students.

"Instead of having the [Student Senate] table in the EMU, [we should] move it out to the residence halls, maybe once a week."

Ted Ehlert, a freshman biology major, saw the need to educate students on what the senate was doing, but he also expressed a desire to see the senate implement advocacy programs to find out what students want.

Other candidates responded to what they saw as discord within the senate. Ray Suit, an undeclared freshman running for an academic seat, wished to see the senate make a strong committment and stick to it.

"I'd like to see the senate team come together ... [and] that people who are elected stay the whole year."

Speaking about possible improvements in the academic realm, Sean VanGordon, a sophomore political science and economics major, proposed that the University should make professors more accountable for what they teach in class.

"If half of the students fail, there's something wrong," he said. 'Right now there's no way for students to come up and say 'we did-

Jeffrey Read, a freshman political science major running for one of the academic seats, advocated for the needs of social science students who need more adequate facilities, aside from Willamette and Deschutes Halls, to complete their studies.

"I feel that the social science majors are being left behind."

Following along with student concerns, Eric Bailey, an undeclared freshman, explained his ideas to help students, from choosing majors to understanding the incidental fee.

"Another way of getting at [the incidental fees] would be a Web site, similar to the ASUO's."