

## Conference

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everything from waste products to cars that don't meet American smog standards.

This pollution, Luna said, is the reason behind an epidemic of sicknesses in the country, such as children being born with birth defects and girls beginning to menstruate at ages as young as seven years old.

"The U.S. strip mines our mountains, and what makes it okay is that we're a nameless bunch of people who they don't have to have a relationship with," she said.

Because the Philippines does not have enough political clout to combat what Luna described as

the environmental racism from the United States, she said there is little chance the problem will be resolved soon.

"It's on and on as we move into the Information Age, and there's never going to be a catch-up game for any of the developing countries," she said.

In a panel discussion Saturday afternoon, Mary O'Brien, a member of the Eugene toxics board, addressed the seriousness of risk assessment, a method to determine how much of a certain chemical or product can be used without harming the environment.

O'Brien criticized the practice of risk assessment, saying it is not dependable because there is no way to know all the potential dangers of certain substances, especially when they are combined with oth-

er chemicals.

"Risk assessment is filled with assumptions and estimates, and they're dressed up to look like accurate numbers," she said.

Although LaDuke said she is fearful for the future of the environment, she also said there are more solutions than problems.

"We're putting up our first wind generator on my reservation, and they could use a lot more generators in California," she said.

LaDuke, a mother of three, said the government could learn how to treat the environment from the rules her children live by.

"You've gotta clean up your mess before you make a new one," she said. "If you don't know how to clean up your mess, you shouldn't be able to make a new one."

## Strength

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Hess sold her chiropractor practice two years ago to earn her doctorate. While in practice, Hess treated a number of elderly patients injured because an impaired sense of balance resulted in falls, and she decided to focus her doctoral research on using muscle strength training to improve impaired balance.

She said she began by examining other studies that used strength training to improve balance in athletes. These studies found that by increasing ankle strength, balance improved. What makes her study unique, Hess said, is that it focuses on people who are currently having balance problems.

Mullen said she believes that strength training will help her and

other elderly people accomplish more. With improved balance, Mullen thinks she will be able to perform everyday activities such as shopping, cleaning house and even walking better.

Hess said researchers in the study will use a hydraulic platform that simulates slips and trips. The participant stands on a platform in a harness and the platform is set to move forward or backward. Four video cameras surround the platform, monitoring the movement, while sensors in the platform analyze how long it takes the participant to regain equilibrium after a slip or trip.

Despite having the equipment ready to go, Hess said the biggest obstacle will be recruiting people.

"We are looking for people who are healthy, but balance impaired," she said.

Hess said the study needs six

people to begin, and her team is using advertisements highlighting the possible benefits of the study in special-interest publications to attract participants.

In preparation for the study, Hess and her colleagues designed a muscle strength training facility. Equipment that was previously used by Physical Activity and Recreation Services in Esslinger Hall was given to the department for the study. After this study, the room will be open to other researchers interested in strength training.

Paul van Donkelaar, associate professor in the department of exercise and movement science, said there is interest among other graduate students in using the facility.

"It opens up the possibility of research for other students," van Donkelaar said.

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