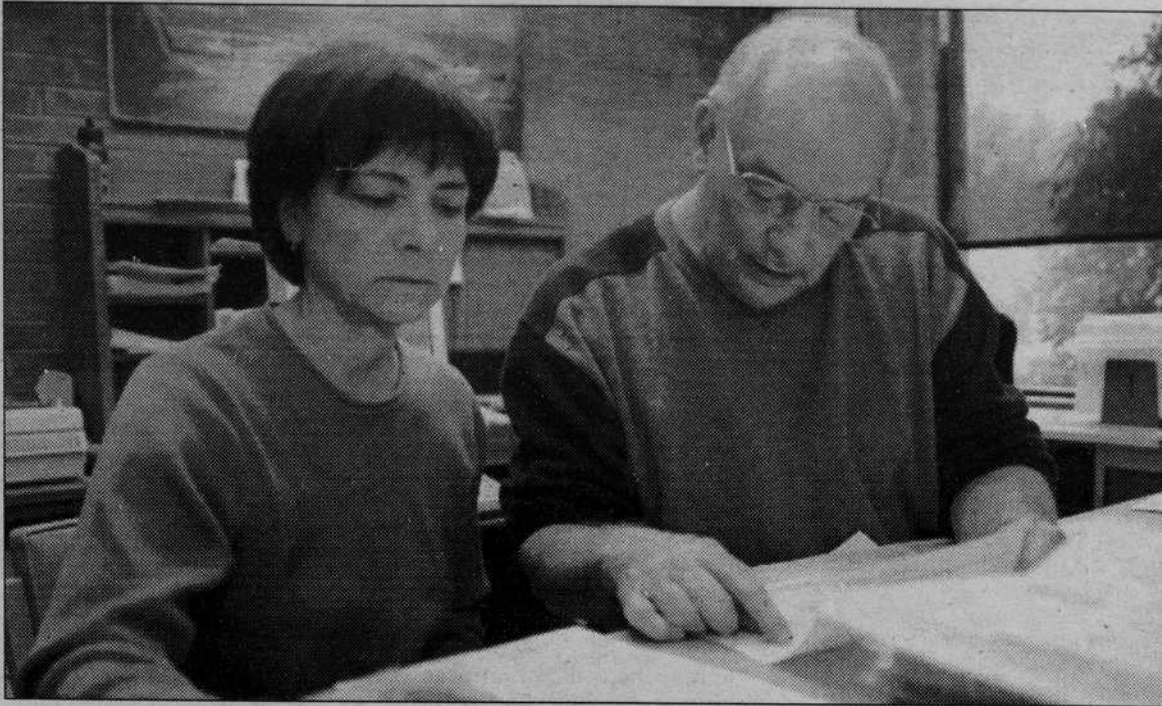




Paula Staight, newly-appointed director of health education for the University Health Center, reviews an itinerary with Robert Petit for an upcoming conference in Las Vegas. Staight worked 10 years at Sacred Heart Medical Center before her return to campus.

Alumnus, counselor is hired as new health center staffer

■ After 10 years at a local hospital, Paula Staight returns to the University as director of health education

By Brooke Ross
Oregon Daily Emerald

University alumnus Paula Staight returned to campus in January as the new health education director at the University Health Center to target students' alcohol and drug issues and meet the health needs of a diverse campus population.

Staight said she has always been devoted to health care — she worked for 10 years at Sacred Heart Medical Center in Eugene, the same hospital where she was born.

"That's just the way things work out sometimes," she said. "It's great to be back on campus."

Staight, who was a nutrition counseling graduate teaching fellow during her University years, said she has always been interested in the medical field because it allows her to help others.

"It's rewarding to know the knowledge you give to someone will impact them for the rest of their lives," she said.

Staight said she knows she has affected at least one person. She said one of the most significant moments of her medical career oc-

curred when she worked on the women's floor at the hospital and provided counseling to a woman who had miscarried.

"I counseled her about the loss, and about four years later, she called and told me how much what I said helped," she said. "Sometimes it can take that long to heal."

Staight said she decided to turn her attention toward students because she saw many cases of hospital patients suffering from drug and alcohol problems. She said she realized that for many people, these problems start in their university years.

"Colleges face the same consequences of alcohol and drug abuse as at the hospital," she said. "My goal is to educate and support students so they don't end up on oxygen at 50."

Staight said she is adjusting to her duties as director, including reaching out to the campus community on health issues, coming up with new ideas for improving student health and supervising the program's staff.

"Part of learning a new job is just standing back and observing what's going on," she said.

Besides focusing on alcohol and drug problems, Staight said she will reach out to ethnic groups to identify their specific health needs and make sure their health con-

cerns are being addressed properly.

Dr. Gerald Fleischli, director of the health center, said he is working with Staight to address some of these issues.

"We're hoping to find ways to meet the special health needs of a very diverse population," Fleischli said. "For example, she might be reaching out to find out what their needs are and then report back to us what they'd appreciate having."

He also said they are in the preliminary stages of increasing campus outreach and hope to also introduce courses taught by clinicians.

Annie Dochnahl, peer health education coordinator, said the program benefits from Staight's past medical experience. Dochnahl is working with Staight to find additional ways the program's student members can increase their involvement.

"It's nice to have someone who has worked as a social worker, because having that viewpoint in college health is very refreshing," she said. "It's been great working with her."

Fleischli said he also appreciates Staight's enthusiasm.

"With people who are not enthusiastic, you give them a new idea and they don't get to it right away," he said. "But with Paula, she comes back a week later with great ideas."

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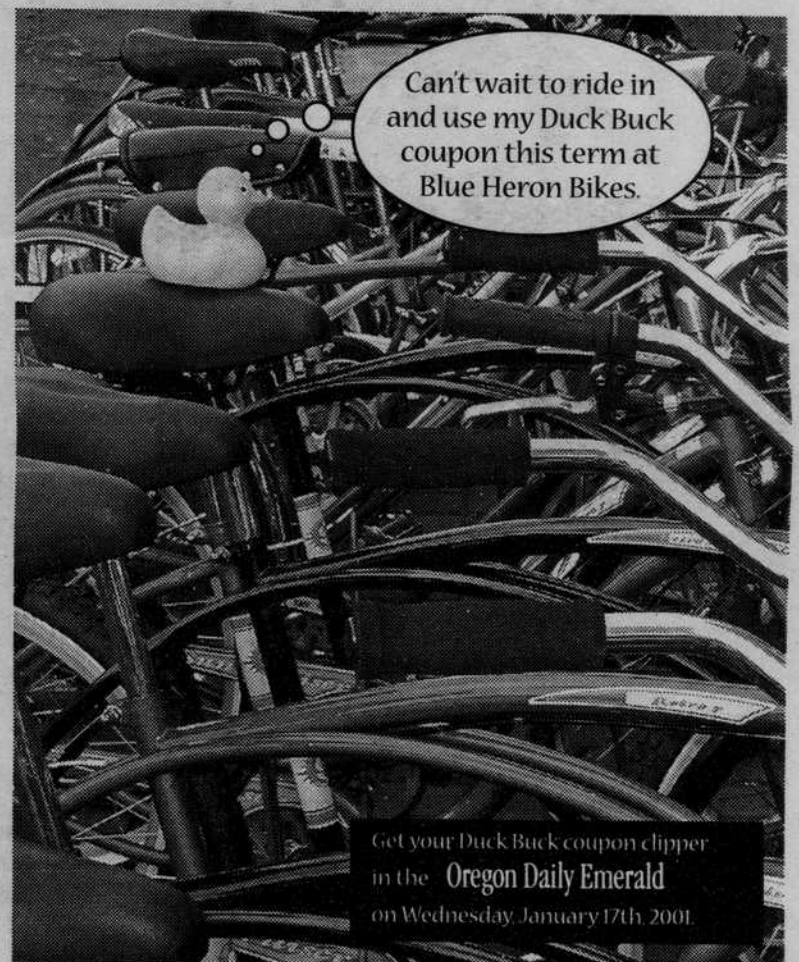
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