

Oregon watershed councils seek new blood

■ Volunteer opportunities include watershed assessment and water quality monitoring

By Anne Le Chevallier
Oregon Daily Emerald

In Eugene, water is everywhere. It runs from the tap, falls from the sky and flows in rivers, tributaries and streams.

But for University graduate Cindy Thieman, water is not just a convenience — it is the focus of her academic and professional involvement in the Long Tom Watershed, which is located west of Eugene.

Today at 4 p.m., Thieman will extend an invitation to undergraduate and graduate students to follow the same path and become involved in Oregon watershed councils. In 303

Chapman, representatives from the Mid-Fork Willamette, Coast Fork Willamette and McKenzie Watershed Councils will share information about their organization, activities and volunteer opportunities.

Operating with limited grant funds, the watershed councils were formed by and depend on volunteers. While obtaining her graduate degree in biology and planning, public policy and management, Thieman wrote the grant application in 1997 that initially funded the Long Tom Watershed Council. As the council's projects and monitoring coordinator, Thieman currently works with a volunteer group of citizens to learn about the watershed and what they can do to improve the water quality and habitat conditions of their local streams and tributaries.

Although the council's members — environmentalists, farmers and residents — have diverse backgrounds, they come together at council meetings to give their opinions and see the fruits of their labor. Changes they have made involve pesticide-spraying habits, stream shading and erosion prevention.

Students also can have a direct impact on Oregon's water and habitat quality.

"Students may become engaged at many different levels," Honors College science Professor Dennis Todd said. "Some may want an excuse to get out in the open air and plant trees for a day or two; others may undertake a terminal project or thesis topic."

The councils potentially need students' help in their watershed

assessment, water quality monitoring and restoration activities, Thieman said. She added that in the past, student-volunteers have learned new skills and have also been a real asset to watershed councils. They can also gain internship credit.

"It's a win-win situation for both (students and watershed councils)," she said.

University graduate student Jason Barney became involved with the Long Tom Watershed Council by chance. Barney met a council intern in a University computer lab. At another chance rendezvous on Spencer's Butte, Barney volunteered his geography skills to help the council.

Now, Barney uses software to analyze data and display analysis on

maps. In fact, Barney's internship work with the watershed council has developed into his graduate thesis. He said he plans to assess stream-restoration potential, determine the most effective method of restoring streams and prioritize them. Because a watershed requires an inherently interdisciplinary approach, Barney said he must research biology, chemistry, ecology and geography.

Barney said that those passionate about the environment should volunteer with the councils and test the career waters.

"It's practical, hands-on, real-world stuff," he said.

Anne Le Chevallier is a features reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald. She can be reached at annelechevallier@dailymerald.com.

National survey shows doctoral candidates generally satisfied

■ The opinions of graduate students at the University, however, vary by department

By Kara Westervelt
for the Emerald

A recent nationwide survey of doctoral candidates shows that while graduate students are satisfied overall with their doctoral programs, they are less satisfied with job placement services and the level of preparation they receive as teaching assistants. Graduate students at the University, however, may not feel the same way.

The survey was conducted by the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students and released Oct. 17. It features data collected from more than 30,000 doctoral candidates in various departments at universities across the United States. Students were polled via an online

questionnaire from March 30 to August 15, 2000, according to the NAGPS Web site. Any student enrolled in a doctoral program for at least one term was eligible to participate.

The survey asked graduate students' opinions about 10 different subjects, such as Career Guidance & Placement Services, Teaching and TA Preparation, and Overall Satisfaction. Each program category gave a letter grade to each subject.

On average, the students surveyed rated their overall satisfaction a B, but gave both job placement services and TA preparation a C rating.

Some of the 3,472 graduate students at the University may feel differently, however.

"I am very satisfied with my graduate school experience," Lesley Godfrey, a history graduate student, said. "The faculty and staff take a personal interest in my success."

Heather Coughlin, a doctoral candidate in the mathematics department, agreed. "The math department at the U of O is very proud of its students, and they show it."

Coughlin also said she feels prepared to teach.

"I feel that the [math] department tries, to the best of its ability, to prep the GTFs for teaching," said Coughlin.

The department requires all Graduate Teaching Fellows to take a week-long prep course to discuss various aspects of teaching, she said.

Another concern for the participants of the NAGPS survey was job placement assistance and how well their programs prepared them for a career.

"I am very confident that my adviser and my department, including professors and other grad students, will help me in my job search,"

Coughlin said. "They will offer opinions, hear my presentations and make comments, and cover my classes when I have to go on interviews."

Students in other programs may feel differently, however.

"As far as I know, the arts department doesn't have a whole lot of job placement assistance available," said Joseph Stengel-Goetz, a visual design graduate student.

"The lack of up-to-date technology is the biggest thing that holds (visual design) students back from being prepared for the workplace," Stengel-Goetz said. "Because Web technology has only been around since the '90s, visual design is still trying to get a firm footing."

Most of the professors have had experience in the workplace, though, he added, and can offer ideas about what to pursue after graduation.

In addition to adviser and depart-

mental support, the University Career Center offers several services to graduate students. It provides customized career counseling and employment searches. Also, its Reference Letter Service keeps students' reference letters on file and sends them out to potential employers.

"Our services are sought out by graduate students who seek nonacademic careers," said Lawrence Smith, the Career Center director. "For students who are seeking academic careers, their academic advisers can best help them."

Doctoral students at the University have a strong placement record in the academic field, particularly in English, psychology and the sciences, Smith said.

"The University's students are very well-prepared to enter the workforce," he said.

Kara Westervelt is a freelance reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald.

News briefs

Lane County plans for redistricting

Lane County Commissioners will decide on a redistricting plan for the county 9 a.m. Tuesday in the Commissioners' Conference Room at 125 E. Eighth Ave. Districts are being adjusted to reflect changes in Lane County's population from the 2000 Census. The county has five voter districts: West Lane, Springfield, South Eugene, North Eugene and East Lane.

The commissioners have considered three options for redistricting and must implement new boundaries six months before the May primary election.

— Sue Ryan

ASUO fundraising dinner canceled

The fundraising dinner to aid in the relief effort for victims of the Sept. 11 attacks, sponsored by ASUO, the International Students Association and Students of the Indian Subcontinent, has been canceled.

The event was originally scheduled for tonight, but ASUO President Nilda Brooklyn said the planning committee decided to cancel it. She said they didn't want to put on a dinner that wasn't a quality event.

"Why put on a fundraising dinner that could raise \$600 when we could do one that raised \$4,000?" she said.

Although it was not ASUO that initiated the project, Brooklyn said there has been interest to hold a fundraiser for victims of Sept. 11,

and that the dinner could be rescheduled.

"It is definitely something we are considering doing for next term," she said.

— Anna Seeley

PFC, EMU Board see budget increases

The ASUO Student Senate discussed benchmarks for the ASUO Programs Finance Committee and the EMU Board at Tuesday's meeting.

A 69 percent increase for the PFC passed 9 to 2, with one abstention, and a 6 percent increase for the EMU passed 8 to 5.

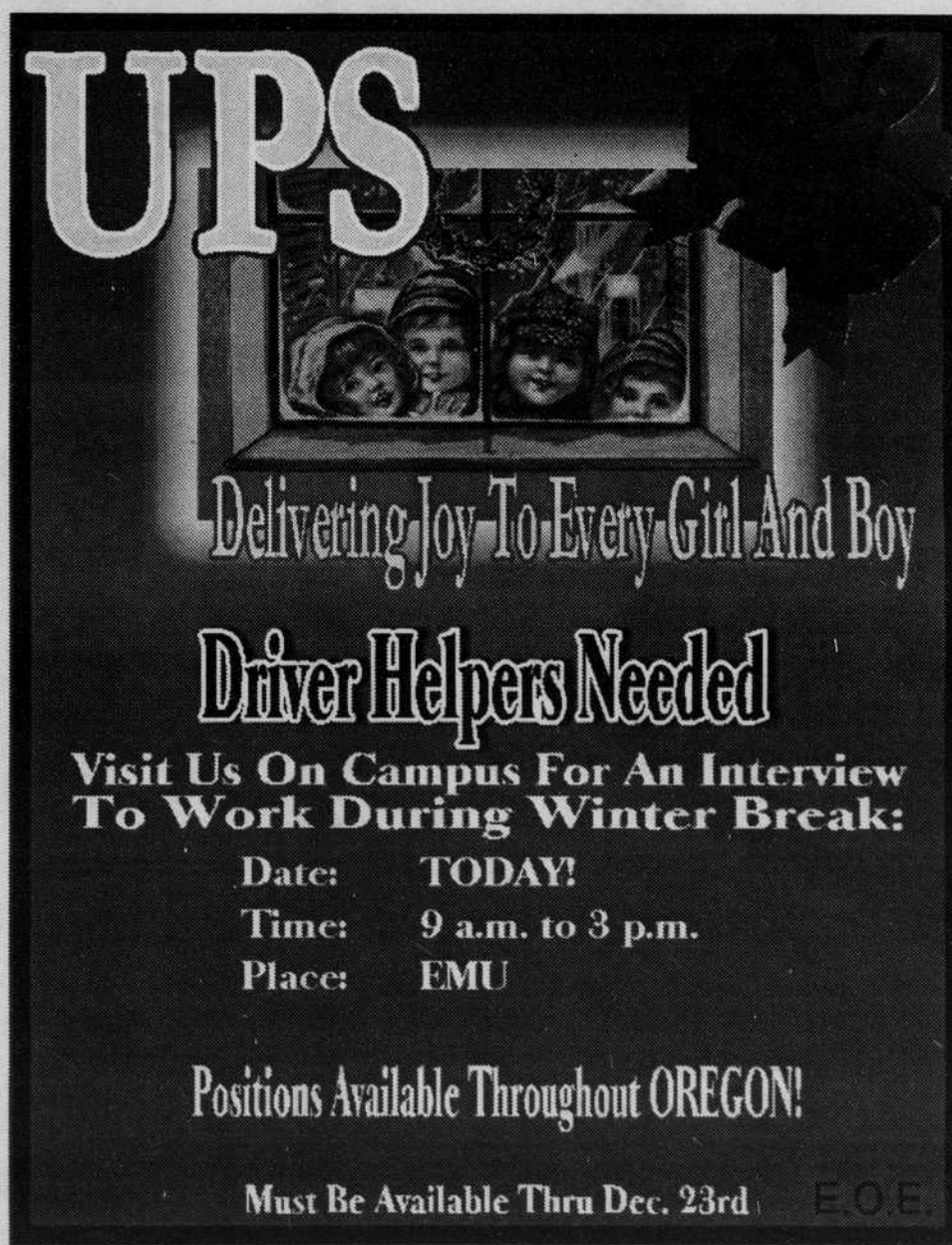
The benchmarks serve as a goal for the organizations when they create their budgets next term. Senate Vice President Andy Elliott said if the groups want an increase higher than their benchmark, they must have justification.

The PFC's unusually high benchmark was due to the new ballot measure passed in the Fall 2001 Special Election that gives the PFC a one-year exemption from the 7 percent budget-growth limit. Senator Mary Elizabeth Madden said the benchmark could increase student fees by approximately 3 to 4 percent.

The EMU Board requested a 7 percent benchmark, but some senators worried that too high an increase would discourage groups from making possible cutbacks in their budgets.

The Senate debated allocating a 5 percent benchmark, which the EMU Board said would hardly cover the 5.15 percent needed to maintain current service levels.

— Diane Huber



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