

Group to redesign Web site to reflect 'vibrancy' of UO

Members of the task force would like the site to appeal to various groups of people, such as potential students

BY EVA SYLWESTER
NEWS REPORTER

Visitors to the University's Web site within the next few months will find changes to its layout as a task force works to make the site easier to use.

"The goal is to make it more informative and useful to external populations, especially prospective students," said Deborah Carver, University librarian and interim associate vice president for information services. Carver, who is heading the project, said the task force was formed at the request of University Senior Vice President and Provost John Moseley.

"The current Web site is very internally focused, which is great for students, faculty and staff, but we want something accessible to parents and prospective students," said Kirstin Hierholzer, the assistant director of the library's center for educational technologies.

Carver said the University's current Web site is functional but lacking.

"It doesn't reflect the quality and vibrancy of the University of Oregon," she said.

Carver said the primary home

page and a set of secondary Web sites should be running in their new forms before the start of fall term, ideally by Sept. 1.

Hierholzer said the task force is currently meeting with various administrators on campus to discuss ways to improve the Web site's navigation, look and feel. Future steps may include usability tests, which would give representatives from various groups that use the Web site — prospective and current students, faculty, staff and alumni — a chance to preview and provide feedback on the Web site changes.

The task force is looking at Web sites of peer institutions for ideas. Carver noted that many other universities run graphics and accompanying general interest news stories on their Web sites, something the University currently does not do.

"We want the page to be more dynamic, more current, more interesting," Carver said, adding that some of the photos on the current Web site were taken years ago.

Carver said the new Web site will be divided into different sections for different populations. For example,

current students will click on a link that takes them to Web sites relevant to students.

Joe St Sauver, director of user services and network applications at the University computing center, wrote in an e-mail that the University previously redesigned its home page in 2000 and 2002. The 2000 upgrade involved extensive changes such as a new electronic campus directory, and the 2002 upgrade centered on the University's adoption of the "O" logo.

Web site users can contribute suggestions to the redesign task force by clicking on the "Web Redesign Comments" link at www.uoregon.edu. Carver said the task force has received about 100 comments since making the suggestion form available three or four weeks ago. She said a common response from people already familiar with the Web site is that the page is easy to use but needs more flair, and the main complaint is that the page doesn't tell much about the University.

"We're looking at function as well as attractiveness, and we want to give a strong message about the University and the quality of education that takes place," Carver said.

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Smoking: Some suggest designated areas for smokers

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really has very many different layers to get through to solve all the issues," Coots said.

Coots said she eventually would like to see a smoking ban on the entire campus and said K-12 public schools across the country have begun embracing campus-wide smoking bans.

Jacque Pollard, a graduate teaching fellow in the English department, said she doesn't think such a ban is enforceable and said the negative reaction it would receive would hamper its effectiveness.

"I'd be pretty cheesed off if I was told I had to go to Rennie's to have a cigarette," Pollard said.

University law school graduate Kevin Franken testified at the City Council meeting that addressed the ordinance and said he is confident the University community will work with the city to embrace the ordinance and enforce the ban.

He said he was not aware that the city ordinance may not be enforceable at the University but said he is optimistic about the University being able to enforce a policy of its own.

"The University community really needs to come behind this effort to reduce smoking and reduce exposure of nonsmokers to second-hand smoke," Franken said.

Creative writing professor Laurie Drummond said she supports the University's efforts to decrease the community's exposure to second-hand smoke but questioned where smokers would go if they had to be at least 25 feet from a building entrance.

"I'm all in favor of not imposing my habit on others, but I hate to see it become punitive," Drummond said. "I think they need to set up a smoking area."

Coots said she does not support the creation of designated smoking areas because they could be aesthetically unappealing.

"It would be nice to not have smokers congregated," Coots said.

GTF Terese Reynolds said extending the smoking ban on campus is not something she is particularly excited about because of laws that already restrict smoking in bars and restaurants.

"Let's keep outside. This is the only place we have left," Reynolds said.

Reynolds said the smoking ban extension should be accompanied by the formation of smoking areas, mainly because of the bad weather for which Oregon is known.

"Give us a dry spot and I'll move," Reynolds said.

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