

Frohnmayer pledges to take environmental action and curb the University's carbon emissions

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News Reporter

Oregon has joined other universities across the nation in the effort to combat global warming.

At the campus Earth Day celebration Wednesday, University President Dave Frohnmayer announced his inclusion in the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. In signing the commitment, Frohnmayer pledged to reduce and ultimately eliminate campus greenhouse gas emissions.

According to Frohnmayer, the document includes specifics for reducing the University's carbon footprint, which entail taking inventory of greenhouse gas emissions and developing an institutional action

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Environment: Mayor, law professor call for collective action to solve climate problems

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It also includes time tables and mechanisms for tracking progress to see that goals are met.

While this new commitment is another important step in reducing the University's carbon dioxide emissions, Frohnmayer emphasized that it is neither the first nor the only time that the University has worked to become more environmentally friendly.

"Be proud that this isn't just a new project," Frohnmayer said. "This is something that, in some way, is part of the DNA of this very institution."

Frohnmayer said the United States' higher education system plays an important role as a beacon of progress, both in the past by battling for free speech and civil rights, and by leading the way in environmentalism for the future.

"Higher education must place itself on the front line of the battle of its time," Frohnmayer said. "An overwhelming array of evidence has convinced many of us and many more all the time that the challenge of climate control and climate change must be our new front line."

He said that both the country and the world need to seriously consider the cost of shifting to an emissions-free energy system and that the process "must begin here and must begin now."

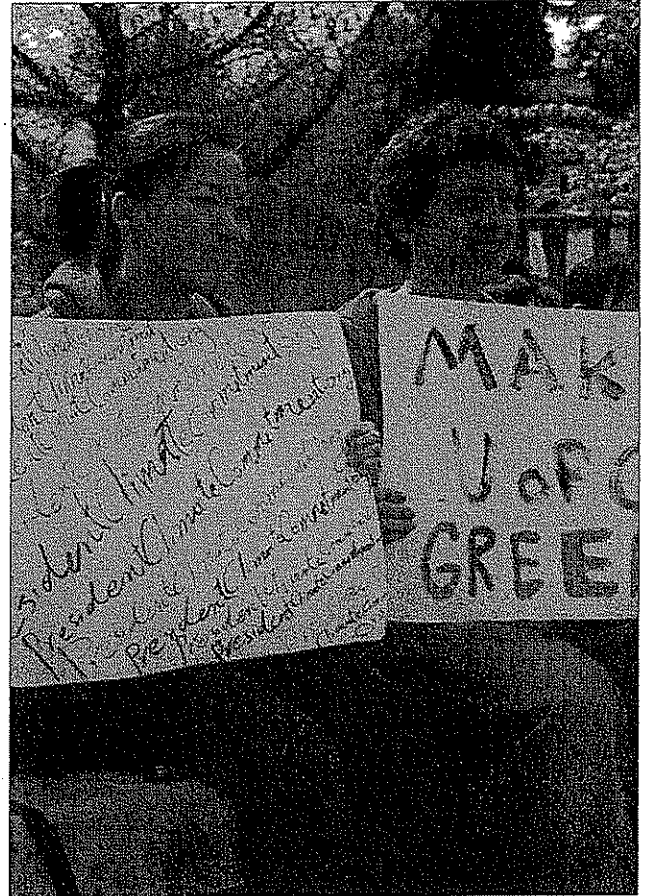
Second-year student Topher Vollmer was in the audience for Frohnmayer's speech.

"I support him. I think that it's important that as a campus we're involved in something like this," Vollmer said. "I think that a place like a college campus is a great place to start these grass roots movements."

University law professor Mary Wood, who preceded Frohnmayer on the podium, began with an urgent call to action.

"Suddenly and unexpectedly, the crisis is upon us," she said.

Wood cited melting polar ice caps and glaciers, warming oceans and thinning Brazilian forests transforming



CHRISTIN PALAZZOLO | Photo Editor

Students celebrate in anticipation of Earth Day in the EMU Amphitheater on Wednesday afternoon.

into savannahs.

Six million people around the world will face starvation, she said, according to recent UN findings.

Wood also said the American people have been "drugged by business as usual," and that collective action is needed in order to combat the problem.

"We must wake up our government officials. They should be convening task forces. Put them on your speed dial, e-mail them, talk to them often," said Wood, to the applause of the crowd assembled at the EMU.

After Wood and Frohnmayer spoke, Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy issued her Climate Challenge to the people of Eugene. She called for Eugeneans, University students and professors to log on to www.sustaineugene.com and do two things: "Find out how much carbon you're responsible for and identify one new action each month you can commit to and add it to your promise to reduce

your carbon footprint."

Piercy asked all citizens to take simple steps, such as properly inflating car tires or conducting meetings by teleconference, in order to reduce their personal impact.

"I'm definitely going to check it out," said Katherine Strother. "I'm not quite sure I will give up my car, but I'm willing to do the little things I can do to help."

Piercy also announced the formation of a new City of Eugene manager, commission and office of sustainability. The commission and the office will work together with the city council to develop a new plan to reduce city emissions, said Piercy.

She also spoke to the urgency of combating global warming and encouraged citizens to go to the Web site today.

"This process will take time, but we don't really have a lot of time," she said.

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