

Plan based on incremental growth formulated by committee

By SCOTT DALTON
Of the Emerald

Editor's Note: This is the first part of a two-part interview with Jerry Diethelm, chair of the Campus Planning Committee and head of the landscape architecture department, concerning a new development in planning for the University.

If Jerry Diethelm has his way, you'll be hearing a great deal about "the Oregon Experiment" from now on.

What is the Oregon Experiment?

For one thing, it is the third in a series of reports on the construction of planning procedures for the University.

The plan is a conceptual framework for development, according to Diethelm who chairs the Campus Planning Committee.

"The Oregon Experiment," developed under the direction of Christopher Alexander of the Center for Environmental Structure, was adopted by the committee and is to be submitted to University President Robert Clark for his approval.

The basic concept is to make smaller plans covering a shorter period of time based on the idea of "incremental growth," said Diethelm. He added that the new concept is in tune with the current needs of the University.

"In fact the plan, in modified form, is currently being used by the University," stated Diethelm.

The plan is designed to function in a manner similar to that of a living organism. In the same manner that a genetic code structures the development of animal life, explained Diethelm, the University can be guided by certain basic concepts or shared principles of what the campus should be like. While an animal has a genetic code, he added, the actual growth is carried out by individual cells. In a similar sense the report called for growth in a series of local acts based on shared principles of what the campus should be like.

Diethelm stated that he hopes a situation will evolve which is similar to that in Europe where buildings have been constructed over hundreds of years.

"Planners will always be working with something that already exists," he said.

He pointed out that instead of trying to create a total environment at one time, development will be carried out on a piecemeal basis. The authors of the report stated that it is "not possible to fix today, what the environment should be like twenty years from today, and then to steer the piecemeal process of development toward that fixed, imaginary world."

The report organizes the planning ideas into six fundamental principles. The first concept is that development will be based on small projects, allowing a gradual pattern of growth into a campus which provides maximum support for University functions.

One of the main purposes of the plan, noted Diethelm, is to "use what we have." The stress on getting the maximum use out of existing buildings and the provisions for user input into the planning process will allow a more ecological growth of the campus, according to Diethelm.

The second fundamental principle of the report requires that those who use structures on the campus should participate in the planning of new

projects.

"As places are created and modified by the people who pass through them," the report stated, "the University will gradually be shaped by an accumulation of actual human experience."

Users are defined as anyone who is involved with the University including students, administrators, and faculty, explained Diethelm.

The third principle of the report noted that small projects will be emphasized in order to achieve the desired goal of piecemeal growth. The report argued that small projects cost less than large buildings and usually cost less to maintain.

Diethelm noted that current projections indicate that future college populations will remain stable in the 1980s and 90s.

"The major projects of the fifties and sixties have been completed," added Diethelm.

To finance the small projects, the report called for equal funding of large, medium, and small building plans to "guarantee the numerical predominance of very small building increments."

The fourth principle of planning called for the developing of designs on communally adapted principles or patterns.

In an earlier report entitled "Pattern Language," Alexander described the concepts behind the development of patterns. In essence, a pattern is a conceptual unit which can be applied to situations involving planning efforts. The report noted that those who use the University will have to develop a language which corresponds to the situations, problems and functions of a campus community.

Diethelm explained that a pattern has three parts. First a statement of the problem or condition. Second, information which has been collected on the problem and is on file. Third, an attempt to show a solution. These patterns must be considered when plans for development are being formulated.

For example, under the heading "University Population," the various factors considered in a pattern are mentioned. The pattern includes a description of elements of a campus population noting problems of size and growth rates. Information on campus population and growth rates is on file. In the final section, desirable growth rates and size limitations are described.

The patterns in current use should be replaced by better patterns as they are evolved. They should be based on "explicitly stated observations and experiments," according to the report.

The fifth principle called for a regular process of diagnosis which will evaluate the status of the campus. The real situation at the University can be related to the desirable traits listed in the patterns covering different areas. Patterns can be used for both planning and evaluation of a community.

Although the report called for an annual diagnosis, members of the planning commission indicated that such an evaluation could be more practically carried out if done every other year.

The report's final recommendation called for a funding process which will regulate various projects proposed by users.

Diethelm noted that the funding proposals are the most important and will present the biggest problem in gaining acceptance of the report by the State Board of Higher Education.

Faculty studies computer's uses

Disk packs, magnetic tapes, optical scanners and cathode ray tubes were just a few of the computer accessories touched on by George Struble, associate professor of computer science, in a Tuesday lecture at the EMU.

The presentation was the second in a series of eight lectures designed to aid faculty and staff in understanding the basic abilities and limitations of computers in general and the University computer system in particular. The lecture series is titled "Harnessing a Computer."

Struble, director of the University computer center, outlined some of the ways that informa-

tion can be put in and taken out of a computer. The keypunch is used to punch cards, which are in turn fed into a device called a card reader. While other means of inputting information exist, Struble explained, the card reader is the University's primary inputting device. After photocells read and process the information off of the cards, the resulting information can be printed out at the rate of 700 lines, or 12 pages per minute.

"At that rate, we can produce more information than anyone wants to read," Struble pointed out. "That's one of the problems of the computer age."

In addition to figures, computer capabilities have now expanded to the point that information can be displayed in numerous forms. Struble passed around a computer-drawn graph as an example.

"We're not limited to figures," he said. "If a picture is better than a 1,000 words, we can have a picture."

Another eight-week session will follow this one. The only prerequisite is an interest in what a computer is, how it works, and how the University uses it for administrative purposes. The course is limited to University staff and faculty.

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