

PortlandTribune

College trains green building pros

Mt. Hood Community College program teaches basics to folks in industry

BY ROB CULLIVAN

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Rosemary DiCandilo, lead instructor for Mt. Hood Community College's Sustainable Building Advisor Program, is ambitious, to say the least.

"We're basically redesigning Western civilization," she says.

"We" are the sustainable-building community – professionals who are "greening" buildings by helping reduce their environmental impact or building ones that are eco-friendly.

"I love being at the edge of market transformation, and that's what this is," she says.

Mt. Hood has offered a nationally recognized certificate in sustainable-building advising for the past five years, DiCandilo says, and about 180 students have completed the nine-month program.

Students spend about 15 hours a month in class, along with 10 to 15 hours a month outside the classroom on reading, writing and working on team projects.

The program targets working professionals such as architects, engineers, tenant and developer representatives and contractors. Students learn about sustainable building design, land-use issues, energy-efficiency techniques, green materials, indoor environmental health, water and site design and building operations and maintenance. Students also learn to analyze costs and benefits of incorporating such measures and how to take advantage of financial incentives and technical assistance offered by government, utilities and nonprofit organizations.

Classmates form teams that must produce commercial or residential project proposals by the end of the term.

John Estrem of Newberg, Tammy Stempel of Gladstone and Steve Hatheway of Milwaukie took the course last year at Mt. Hood's Maywood Park campus.

After meeting in class, the trio decided to go into business together and founded a new service within Adapt Engineering Inc., an environmental consulting and engineering firm with offices in Portland and Seattle. The trio provide energy- efficiency audits of existing buildings, designed to help owners reduce energy waste.

"I'm a professional hippie," Stempel, a licensed general contractor, says with a laugh, noting her passion for bringing buildings in line with the natural world.

Her colleague, Estrem, shares her desire to promote green construction.



JAIME VALDEZ / PAMPLIN MEDIA GROUP
Tammy Stempel, Gladstone planning commissioner, checks air filter on City Hall rooftop to improve heating and ventilating system's energy efficiency.

“(Buildings) don’t need to look like a wonder to be efficient and appropriate,” he says, noting even longstanding buildings can become green. Simple things like tuning up a furnace can reduce energy costs, or encouraging employees to turn off room lights when not in use can save money and energy, he and his colleagues say.

Hatheway, who’s worked on energy systems for Wells Fargo Tower, Oregon Health & Science University and the U.S. Bank Tower, credits the Mt. Hood course for giving him a solid background in sustainable building.

Students emerge from the course with the ability to assess a site and suggest improvements, he says.

Stempel appreciates the fact she could “meet and spend time with people who have the same views as I did.”

“This class pulled it all together,” Estrem adds. “When I took the class they addressed all the issues – green building materials, heating systems and renewable energy. It really helped me focus.”

Mt. Hood Community College’s Sustainable Building Adviser program

Where: Maywood Park campus near Portland, at 10100 N.E. Prescott St.

When: The fall course is full, but there is a waiting list, and another session may be scheduled in January.

Cost: \$2,445 tuition, which includes \$250 for certification exam, plus cost of books.

More information: Call 503-491-7235 or visit www.mhcc.edu/sbap

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