



Community Newsletter

The VPA Green Fair—Page 4!

Meet Maureen - The New EH&S Director

For the first time in 12 years, Environmental Health & Safety is under the guidance of new leadership. Maureen Kotlas became the new EH&S director on November 16. We recently had the opportunity to sit down and ask her a few questions.



Maureen Kotlas takes the helm at EH&S

Q: What are your first impressions of Harvard?

A: Well first is that this is an amazing institution. I love the mix of old buildings and new buildings, the people are smart and interesting, and so far I really enjoy living in Cambridge. I'm originally from Long Island, NY and honestly had never even been to Harvard before I started inter-

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Blackstone Burns a Better Oil

Refined Vegetable Oil (RVO) was recently mixed with standard No. 6 fuel oil to fire the Blackstone Steam Plant's boilers that deliver heat to more than 160 campus buildings. The purpose of the test was to compare the air emissions from the RVO mix with the emissions created by burning straight No. 6 fuel oil. The initial results are promising. It appears there was a significant reduction in the level of nitrogen oxide and other emissions when the No. 6 fuel oil was mixed with RVO.

"This project required close coordination between Engineering and Utilities and Environmental Health & Safety," said EH&S Environmental Management Engineer Mohamed Omar. "This is part of an overall UOS strategy to be innovative and more environmentally conscious toward plant operations. State environmental officials were very upbeat about the project."

Over the past few years, E&U has reduced its reliance on oil to fuel the Plant, opting instead for cleaner burning natural gas which is used 80% of the time. Mixing in RVO, when the No.6 fuel oil is used the remaining 20% of the time, has the potential to lower emissions even further.

"We had to tread cautiously," added Blackstone Steam Plant Manager Nick Peters. "You're never quite sure how the boilers, burner tips, and pumps are going to react to a new fuel mix but everything went extremely well."

A complete analysis of the test results is underway and should be ready in a few weeks. If they prove positive, E&U will determine the feasibility of mixing RVO with No.6 fuel oil on a regular basis.



(r-l) E&U Auxiliary Engineer Paul Duggan collects an RVO sample for analysis while John Dale from Combustion Component Associates looks on.



(l-r) E&U Operating Engineer Kevin Purcell and John Dale closely monitor the boilers.

Sustainability Spotlight

Cleaning, With a Layer of Ozone

New product being tested at Blackstone can also be used at home.

It's a little bottle that packs a big cleaning punch. FMO Custodial Services is piloting a new product within Blackstone that uses only water, but reportedly cleans even better than bleach.

The Lotus cleaning system circulates water through 4,500 volts of electricity. Some of the oxygen within the water is converted into liquefied ozone which is then sprayed onto surfaces and wiped clean. Liquefied ozone, which after a short time converts back to water, is a natural sanitizer capable of killing bacteria and viruses. Using fewer chemicals certainly creates a safer environment, but the bottles might also pay for themselves by eliminating the need to purchase often expensive cleaning solutions.



The Lotus cleaning system uses liquefied ozone to disinfect

FMO will continue to test the Lotus system at Blackstone to determine its effectiveness. For those looking to reduce the use of potentially harmful cleaning chemicals at home, this product might suit your needs. For more information on the home version of the Lotus cleaning system (which costs about \$150) log on to www.tersano.com.

The People of UOS

Did you know that UOS employs more than 700 people and most of them work in various locations all around the University. We would like to take some time to highlight the employees who are on the front lines everyday performing important work and interacting with our customers and the greater Harvard community.



Parking Monitor Shih-Ming Wang has been working at UOS for more than 2 years. He was born in Taiwan and came to the United States in 1976.

What's your typical day like? I assist management in servicing our customers and their parking needs. I have the opportunity to work all over the University in many different locations which I enjoy very much.

What do you like best about your job? When I hand out a parking ticket! No really, because when I do that, the customers learn that they need to purchase parking permits and then the University runs more efficiently.

Has there been a time recently when you were recognized for outstanding work? I recently received a letter from a customer who works at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. She thanked me for always being friendly and accommodating no matter what the circumstance. That made me feel good because I knew that my job was making a difference in someone's day.



Custodian Daniel Amado has been working at Harvard for 5 years. He was born in Cape Verde Islands.

What's your typical day like? I work at the Malkin Athletic Center (MAC) during the day. My time is spent making sure that I do the best job possible and that our customers are happy.

What do you like best about your job? I like the fact that I can work independently. I also like that I have the ability to move around a lot during the day.

What gives you the most satisfaction from your job? The best moments for me are when the customers are happy and they tell me that they really appreciate what I do for them. That makes me the most proud.

UOS in the news

EH&S Public Health Manager Val Nelson was recently featured in the Harvard Gazette for her tireless efforts to ensure campus meals are safe. Here's an excerpt from the article:



"Safety Ninja" Val Nelson

Far from the beaten path of Harvard Square, with its austere libraries and scurrying students, Valerie Nelson is freezing food. Not just any food, but some of the University's food, which is kept for an undisclosed amount of time in an unidentified location, all in the interest of safety and public health. Nelson is a safety ninja. You might've seen her, though most likely not. She's one of a group of clandestine food inspectors who show up unannounced at some of Harvard's most publicized events, including Commencement. She was there, sampling the catering trays while using individually wrapped tongue depressors — "Much to the dismay of people serving wonderful things like filet mignon," she revealed — and was in and out before anyone could stop short, exiting into a haze of fog. "Ninety percent of what I do is under the radar," said Nelson, whose office is on the outskirts of campus. "It's a part of the protection of the health and safety of the community that people are not aware of, but it's happening behind the scenes all the time."

Food samples are refrigerated for three days (most food-borne illnesses emerge during that time, Nelson said) before being frozen, or "archived" for later testing should a need arise.

To read the full article, cut and paste the following link:
<http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2009/11/food-for-thought-and-testing/>

viewing for this position. In addition to starting this new job, being able to enjoy the area's rich history has made this a very exciting time.

Q: Being a new employee at Harvard can pose a unique set of challenges. What has been your experience so far?

A: There are a lot of acronyms! I also find myself constantly referring to the large campus map on my office wall. More specifically though, I can tell that I'll be spending a fair amount of time just learning how Harvard works. That includes both big picture items like better understanding the needs of the EH&S customers, to completely mundane tasks such as who do I call if my email stops working.

Q: Why did you decide to accept this position and move to the Boston area?

A: This was a professional opportunity that I couldn't pass up. Most recently I was the EH&S Director at the University of Maryland and before that I worked at Stony Brook in New York. Harvard is a recognized leader not only in academics but also in the EH&S field, so to be able to become a part of this group and make a contribution – it's really a tremendous opportunity.

Q: As you begin to lead EH&S, what are some of your top priorities?

A: My first priorities are to get to know the EH&S staff, UOS staff and the Harvard customers. I'll be working through a process of learning our programs and services, assessing and addressing any urgent issues, gaining an understanding of the budget and preparing for FY-11, and working with my staff to see how we should move our programs forward.

Q: Harvard is highly decentralized – what's your experience operating in this type of environment?

A: The University of Maryland and Stony Brook are probably more consolidated than Harvard, but both schools had their fair share of decentralization. Maryland especially had a large number of affiliates that were not within the University system yet at the same time we provided services and worked closely with them. So I'm certainly familiar with decentralization. I think there's some level of decentralization within most large organizations.

Q: As EH&S Director, what challenges did you face at the University of Maryland?

A: The biggest challenge had been the impact of the recession on the university's budget. It was very difficult to face successive operational cuts, furloughs and even layoffs. I found that regular and honest communication with my staff was vital. We had to find ways to continue our programs within a climate of continuing budget contraction. Despite the difficulty, I was inspired by the dedication and innovation of our staff to keep from losing the progress that had been made over the years. The message that seemed to conclude each difficult discussion was "we'll get through this and it will make us stronger". I believe that will hold true for all of us as we pull out of this economic crisis and into a brighter future.

Milestones

New Hires

Rachel Sceviour—Staff Assistant, Transportation Services/A&F

Matthew Farineau—Web Application Developer, AT

Alexandra Robbins—Staff Assistant, EH&S

Timothy Legassey—Plumber, FMO

Anthony Radosta—Plumber, FMO

Damien McClory—Horticulturist, FMO

New Additions

Sarah Eberly, EH&S—Baby Boy

Promotions (promoted to)

Christopher Tolkaz—Operations Supervisor, Mail Services

Hytham Ashuraey—Staff Assistant III, Mail Services

Get Well Wishes

Bill Hart—Plumber, FMO

Mike Scioli— Fire Electrician, FMO

Morena Ulloa—Custodian, FMO

Jason MacKay—Property Maintenance Worker II, FMO

You're Invited to The VPA Green Fair

Learn what VPA is doing to improve sustainability and how you can help. Socialize with your friends from UOS, HUDS and HRES, and enjoy:

- Free Food
- Games
- Prizes

When: Friday, December 11

Where: Dudley House (Lehman Hall), Second Floor
Common Room

Time: 12:30-2:30

See You There!