B.C. SEEKS MORE AUTHORITY ON HANDLING LABORATORY WASTE

By Mark Sullivan
Staff Writer

Boston College has joined with seven other New England universities in seeking more authority to manage its own laboratory wastes.

As part of the Laboratory Consortium of Environmental Excellence, the University is helping devise an environmental management plan that will allow institutions to police themselves under guidelines that uphold federal standards while "making sense" in a research laboratory context, according to Environmental Health and Safety Director Suzanne Howard.

Boston College would be one of three universities in the region allowed to self-regulate its laboratory wastes under the new guidelines if the Environmental Protection Agency approves a proposed three-year pilot project, Howard said.

Howard said current rules on hazardous waste don't distinguish between industry and scientific research and laboratory research can become unnecessarily tangled in a thicket of federal regulations.

"EPA regulations were developed for manufacturing, not labs," Howard said. "Manufacturing facilities use large amounts of a relatively few number of chemicals, while labs use a large variety of chemicals in small amounts. Meantime, manufacturers are not doing research and development. They know the product that will result, but this is not necessarily the case for laboratories."

Through the consortium, the universities would devise ways of reducing the amount of waste produced by their labs, Howard said, and help local high schools and community colleges develop their own waste regulation programs.

"For example," said Howard, "you currently have three days to move a full container out of a lab. We might put forward a standard that allows the container to be moved in 10 business days. What we're trying to put forth to the EPA is that the risk associated with hazardous wastes in labs is minimal."

Howard said the consortium submitted a draft plan to the EPA in January and is negotiating a final version that would be tested in a three-year pilot project to be launched this summer. The University of Massachusetts at Boston and the University of Vermont also would participate in the pilot project.

The other members of the consortium are Harvard, Northeastern and Tufts universities, Trinity College of Hartford, and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Holocaust today

The Jesuit Institute will present "The Holocaust: Remembering for the Future," a discussion on the recent Vatican document on the Holocaust, today from noon-2 p.m. in Gasson 100.

Canisius Professor Michael Buckley, SJ, the institute director, will serve as a moderator for the discussion. Panelists will include Prof. Anthony Saldarini (Theology), Prof. John Michalczyk (Fine Arts) and Assoc. Prof. Alan Kafka (Geology and Geophysics).

Asst. Prof. Rabbi Ruth Langer (Theology) also will present a reading at the event.

Chaplaincy to sponsor Service of Remembrance

The University Chaplaincy will hold its annual Service of Remembrance for family, friends and colleagues who have died during this academic year on Wednesday, April 29, at 5:15 p.m. in Gasson 100.

The names of those who have died will be inscribed in Boston College's Book of Remembrance.

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