



# Waste not want not

## RE-PURPOSING EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS IS A DAILY PRACTICE IN FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Recycling at UBC's Okanagan campus covers a lot more than paper and cardboard.

Desks, chairs and just about any manner of office equipment that can be reused and repurposed will be found a new home.

Rob Buonomo, facilities coordinator, says it makes sense to reuse as much material as possible. Buonomo will even keep the stripping around a desk for use on another desk when needed rather than throw away a perfectly good item.

A prime example of reusing items was when it came time to move faculty and staff into the new Engineering, Management and Education building (EME). Many of the faculty destined for the EME were working out of portables while waiting for the EME to open.

They had complete offices in the portables, but when the move was made, the new offices came with desks and chairs so Buonomo used the older desks and chairs for graduate students.

"I inherit all this stuff and then I find a home for it," he says, adding the items are put in short-term storage until they are needed. "When I get a work order, I go and talk to them and see if I have what they need.

"If there are items I can't reuse, I contact the school board to see if they can use them. If not, we call the Salvation Army or other non-profit organizations in our community such as Girl Guides or Scouts Canada to see if they can use it. We try to recycle everything we can."

Office equipment that cannot be reused is broken down with the wood, metal and other materials being recycled accordingly.

Old chairs are stripped of parts that are in working order and used to repair other chairs, meaning fewer chairs have to be purchased and less material is sent to the landfill. Desk drawers and their sliding mechanisms are also kept as repair parts.

"We try to recycle as much as possible," says Buonomo. "We even have a light bulb recycling program."

Because florescent lights contain small amounts of mercury, Buonomo is working with the Battery Doctor in Kelowna to recycle the long glass tubes.

"They take apart the tube and take out the mercury and then ship it off to be responsibly handled," he says.

Buonomo said there is a fee for the service, but it is an environmentally responsible option that is much more cost-effective and safe than purchasing a machine to separate the mercury from the bulbs on campus.

Another bright idea to help save energy is currently taking place. The university is replacing all of the older florescent tubes with newer, more energy-efficient models.

"It's a huge project, but in the long run it will be more efficient," he says. "The bulbs are also cheaper and they last longer, and Fortis BC rebates the program."

Aaron Heck, client services manager for IT, media and classroom services, says the goal of IT Services is also to reuse and recycles as much as possible.

Whenever possible, copiers are reused and reallocated to areas they are needed.

"For desktops, we re-used equipment retired from instructional computer labs for administrative and faculty loaner equipment to provide flexibility for all faculties and departments," says Heck. "When new non-permanent staff are hired, they are issued this loaner equipment. This helps keep the purchase or lease of new equipment to situations where new positions are permanent and ongoing.

"For laptops, we re-used laptops recovered under our computer replacement program as loaners and spares in a manner similar to desktops. A large pool of older [three plus years] laptop loaners also meant we were able to accommodate a large number of specialized one-time requests for laptops for event support or special course work." ●