University Launches Major Environmental Management Initiatives

By lissa Kaplan Michael

T he University has recently taken several major steps to integrate environmental management and environmental education into its teaching and research activities, the operation of its facilities and its interaction with the local community.

This month, the University launched an Environmental Management System (EMS) for its Washington Heights and Larchmont-Dobbs Ferry campuses to better manage and implement the University’s environmental policies. The EMS complements a trend-setting chemical tracking system recently put in place on those campuses that is one of the most innovative and comprehensive efforts of its kind in a U.S. academic environment.

In addition, the Columbia University Medical Center is close to completing a sell-off that is the final chapter of its own environmental program, which includes the handling of all hazardous waste in its laboratories and the EMS. Golin, the University’s director of environmental management, started a comprehensive set of programs for compliance assurance, pollution prevention and environmental training of students, faculty and employees. The system and its administrative and management oversight structure are described in a document that has been distributed to appropriate faculty and senior administrators and is available online at www.ehrs.colum- bia.edu/EMS.

This program will enable Columbia to provide a healthy and safe place to work, teach and conduct research while at the same time minimizing the environmental impact of its activities and maintaining compliance with applicable federal, state and local regulatory requirements, agreements and permits, and David Hirsh, executive vice president for research and Golin, first of the month editor. He’s a sort of overlooked classic, a guide from the past who guides us back to integrating different abilities for awareness and expression in ourselves.”

—Allan M. Jalon

Jalon, who envisioned the conference shining light on a volatile set of issues during the election season, explained that while Bourne’s outspoken opinions often compromised his favor among peers and politicians, his perspectives on America and war are relevant today “There’s a kind of vacuum when one looks for a large discovery of psychological, socio- logical and cultural contexts of vio- lent conflict today,” said Jalon. “Bourne reaches into our psyches in a way that the culture and writ- ers of today don’t.”

Speakers on the third panel, “Bourne Today,” debated the value relevance of Bourne’s insights, sug- gesting ways he might have updated his thinking if he were alive today and hypothesizing how he would have viewed the war in Iraq. The panelists included Sociology and Journalism Professor Todd Gitlin, First of the month editor Ben DiMotta, author Michael True, writer and cast of Fred Dewey (a great-grandson of John Dewey) and moderator, and former New Yorker writer George Packer.

Gitlin argued that in WWI, the search for heroes against the state became a more important pursuit than winning the war,” a point he compared to the Bush administra- tion’s “Patriot Act.” He noted the “sense of war’s fever,” which Bourne was the first to acknowledge, and how it has reemerged most recently in reaction to the call to the al-Qaeda after Sept. 11, 2001, the “war on terror” and the invasion of Iraq.

Conference organizer Jalon was pleased with the turnout “I determin- ed to put on this conference because I was so impressed with Bourne as someone who found a way to combine talk of politics and culture, democracy and psychology, I thought and feeling and that has been rare throughout America’s intellectual history, and which seems absent far too often today. He’s a sort of overlooked classic, a guide from the past who guides us back to integrating different abilities for awareness and expression in ourselves.”

But perhaps the single most important revelation of the confer- ence is that Bourne’s ideas are still being debated. Randolph Bourne had a new thought every time he wrote an essay,” said. “And you can see his essays, they are living today. You can read them. You can see them online.”

To learn more about Randolph Bourne, visit http://xi.columbia. edu/w0410, where you can also view video archives from the confer- ence.