

## SUPERINTENDENT MAXIMIZES TIGHT BUDGET WITH CREATIVITY AT CAL POLY, POMONA



Trees are pruned selectively, not formally.

Wayne Smith would like to spend \$350,000 to maintain the campus of California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. What he really spends is closer to \$75,000. "I consider my job very challenging," Smith told *Weeds Trees & Turf*.

Tight budgets are just one of the problems that make landscape maintenance challenging for superintendents at large public universities like Cal Poly and small private schools such as Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. While the schools themselves might differ greatly, the grounds superintendents often find themselves facing similar problems. (See *Loyola*, page 46)

"We're the nicest looking school in the system," said Smith, "because of our willingness to plant

shrubs and trees for plant identification." Cal Poly, Pomona is well-known for its programs in ornamental horticulture, landscape architecture and engineering. CPP's planting project is the most ambitious encountered by *Weeds Trees & Turf* in the recent past. Over the next two years, CPP is adding 1200 species of drought-tolerant trees. This is in response to a plan that will cut the school's water supply by 50% in 1985. "The trend is to develop more drought-tolerant species, drip irrigation and drought-tolerant turfgrass," said Smith. "We want to create a beautiful campus but also use as many drought-tolerant species as possible."

In many ways CPP views its role as a model for other campuses. As

the director of landscape services, Smith is directly responsible for the importation of 1200 species of drought-tolerant trees from Australia, South Africa and the Mediterranean. Donning another hat, Smith is the program director of the Landscape Technology Certificate Program. The program is designed for people who want to learn without the pressure of tests and term papers. Started in 1980 by Smith, the program has been very successful in getting information to people who could only make it to evening classes. Classes are six weeks long and 12 courses earn a student a Landscape Technician I Certificate. An additional 12 courses are required for the Landscape Technician II Certificate. Thirty landscape and horticulture courses are currently in the curriculum.

The maintenance system used by Smith at CPP is also innovative; designed to increase worker satisfaction and productivity. Smith has tabbed it "CPMS", for "Campus Programmed Maintenance System." "We use the motto, 'Work smarter, not harder,'" said Smith. "The premise behind our system is that workers have their own areas but they also work in crews." Grounds workers at CPP concentrate on individual areas in the morning, then work as part of the crew in the afternoon. "A lot of campuses have the 'one man/one area' system," stated Smith. "We try to mix it up so the men help each other out and so far it's worked very well."

One example of CPMS in action is CPP's mowing schedule. There are 52 acres of turfgrass that have to be mowed each week and before Smith instituted CPMS different workers mowed their areas on various days. Now the whole campus gets mowed in one day because the men work together on a

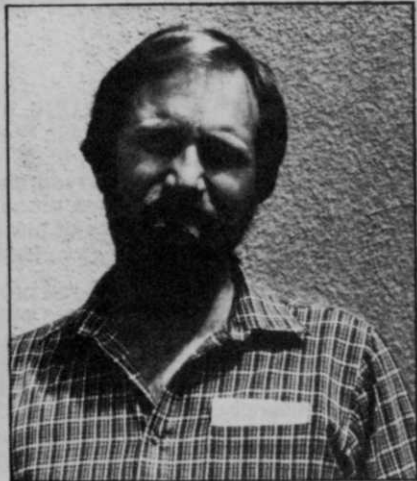
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large mowing crew. An added benefit is an increase in student safety. During the summer the school switches to a four-day/10-hour work week but the grounds crew stays on a five-day/eight-hour work week. With that schedule the crew can mow the whole campus on Friday and not have any interference from the 13,000 students.

Smith is responsible for maintaining 500 acres of CPP campus and it takes a 40-man team to do the job. The men are split into two types of crews—grounds workers and specialty crafts. Twenty-one workers man the grounds crew, while the remaining 19 man the equipment, irrigation and tree



Most special construction is contracted out.



Wayne Smith

crews. Smith is particularly proud of his tree crew. "We selectively prune, rather than formal prune," noted Smith. "The crew is not just out chopping up trees." Since so much of the flora at CPP is used for plant identification, the tree crew prunes so that the plant will retain its natural, esthetic shape. To instruct his crew on the proper selective pruning methods Smith runs training seminars. Besides tree trimming, training programs are set up for irrigation and other areas.

Irrigation at CPP is being set up to handle the coming drought and in many ways is a model for other campuses that are facing drought conditions or are just looking to save on water. Smith is a firm believer in drip irrigation and much

of the campus is being fitted with drip systems. "We see ourselves as a leader in the use of drip irrigation, especially subsurface drip," commented Smith. "Many people are wary of subsurface drip because you can't see the water but we will continue to expand in this area."

As with most grounds managers, Smith has a deep background in landscape management yet with a 40-man crew many of his problems are with people, not plants. He noted that on the average week his job is 40% landscape management and 60% personnel management (and on some days it is 100% personnel management). Business and personnel management are two areas that grounds superintendents should have more background, he confessed. "My biggest headaches have been personnel problems, not that the grass in the quad is burning," according to Smith. "With my technical background I can solve that but when John Doe says 'Stick it in your ear,' you have to know to say the right thing. You have to know how to manage people. Some days it's a nightmare but it is part of the job."

One area where CPP is not unique is its budgeting. The state of California has put the university on a complete monetary freeze. There was no money available for additional personnel, fertilizer, pesticides and other maintenance ad-denda as of Spring, 1982. For the

past three years the school has not had a budget, in the traditional sense. The fiscal year runs from July to July and every year Smith submits a budget detailing how much money will be needed to satisfy the maintenance under his Campus Programmed Maintenance System but he has yet been able to follow it. At various times during the year it is unknown if money will be available for maintenance chemicals. "In a sense, we have been making ends meet by the seat of our pants," contended Smith. "But that is the real world and that is what I tell my students."

Smith would like to contract some work out but often his requests are turned down. He would like to have his pest control done by outsiders but that has not been okayed. "That would alleviate us from purchasing the chemicals, handling, storing and applying them," said Smith. Many special construction projects are contracted out but almost all the maintenance work is handled by Smith.

At CPP there are vast numbers of additional trees and shrubs that are used for plant identification. That creates increased maintenance for Smith and his crew yet his "budget" is on the same formula as other state schools. "Most state universities have a lack of manpower, materials and money," said Smith.

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