

TICKET TO SLIDE

Conference title slips out of the Wildcats' paws.
theorion.com/sports



The Orion

Chico State's Independent Student News Source since 1975

news all week at theorion.com

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2014

FIRST COPY FREE

Chico State sues PG&E

■ The university is hoping to regain \$1.37 million after it cleaned up toxic soil it claims came from a PG&E-owned gas manufacturing plant.

Francis Rivera
Managing Editor

Chico State is suing Pacific Gas and Electric to recover costs from an environmental cleanup the university performed during the reconstruction of the Wildcat Recreation Center.

From 1974 to 1988, the Chico Manufacturing Gas Plant on West Second Street generated tar, sludge and powdered carbon that were often left inside, according to the lawsuit.

Chico State claims that contamination found in the soil at the construction site, a hundred feet north of the plant, was a result of the disposal of byproducts generated by the gas plant.

The university spent \$1,300,000 cleaning up 1,207.44 tons of contaminated soil.

Chico State alleges its damages include:

- property damage
- restoration costs
- delay damages
- property devaluation

PG&E cleaned debris and the affected areas from the plant's contamination and received a certificate of completion from the Department of Toxic Substance Control, said Jeff Smith, a spokesman for the company PG&E acquired the plant in 2001. Most gas manufacturing plants were shut down by 2000.

"We successfully completed a cleanup from July 2004 to July of 2005," Smith said.

"We removed 1,207 tons of soil."

PG&E and Chico State have been in negotiations to see whether or not PG&E bears some responsibility to Chico State's portion of the cleanup, Smith said.

"We will continue to work with Chico State to amicably resolve any pending issues," he said.

Chico State is not able to comment on the lawsuit at this time, Lorraine Plattman, vice president for business and finance wrote in an email to The Orion.

Francis Rivera can be reached at managing@theorion.com or [gmawriter](https://twitter.com/gmawriter) on Twitter.

DOWN & OUT

■ For a look at the struggle between the city, business and the community, visit homeless.theorion.com.

Maver Zarate
Street Editor

For James, home in Chico is where he lays his head.

The 50-year-old is a transient by

choice. He likes to travel, choosing to have washed every continent except Antarctica.

James is joined by many transients seeking shade under Chico's trees, local business openings, public parks and homeless shelters.

The Chico City Council adopted a 40-hour ordinance in November to remedy news from local businesses that feared their community was being jeopardized by transients who inhabited sidewalks.

Shelters are hardly filled to capacity with many transients still choosing to sleep outdoors. Some play music to survive. Others rely on the kindness of strangers.

The homeless haven't gone anywhere, and many businesses still want them off the streets.



FREE RIDE James, a 50-year-old transient in Chico, said the best decision he's ever made in his life was traveling to 17 different countries.

Women working toward equal workforce participation

Madison Holmes
Staff Writer

Women at Chico State are widely underrepresented in the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics fields.

Five female students have graduated with degrees in computer science, computer engineering and electrical engineering in the past four years, according to a study by Jeffrey Bell, chair of the biological sciences department.

The study covers 2010-2014, showing that four percent of graduates in computer science and six percent in electrical engineering were women.

No female students graduated with a computer engineering degree.

Michelle Rodriguez is the only woman double majoring in computer and electrical engineering at Chico State.

"If a job is done and I didn't get it, I don't only feel like I failed myself, but every woman be-

hind me," Rodriguez said.

Chico State is not an anomaly. Women earn about 40 percent of bachelor's degrees over all nationwide, according to an article by the New York Times.

However, only 20 percent of degrees in computer science were earned by women and 10 percent of degrees in engineering.

Melody Stapleton, chair of the computer science department, said when she came to Chico she was the only woman with a doctorate in a department of more than 20 people.

"I was kind of a pioneer," Stapleton said. "There were no tenured-track women in the entire College of Engineering back then."

Being smart and pursuing an education in science or math may not be seen as trendy for women,

she said. "America's culture is on-pop-oriented and what's portrayed to the youth as being hip is not women in science," Stapleton said.

Starting a family is also a priority for many women, said Colleen Browner, a civil engineering professor.

When Browner was in college, a female engineering lecturer visited her school and said that women in the field need to focus only on either their careers or having children, not both, Browner said.

"There are women out there who are more than willing to help, but there are also women who think they have found the right path and believe everyone needs to follow that path, and in my opinion, that's silly," she said.

Suffering through blatant and subtle sexism is also a risk for women working math and science degrees, Browner said.

"There are some old school men who aren't huge fans of women in engineering or having a woman as a boss," she said.

When Browner studied in Japan, she dropped a class because the male professor was sexually harassing her and the other female students in the course, Browner said.

Rodriguez remembers walking into her first science lab as a first year and a male student told her she was in the wrong class. "I looked at him and said, 'No, I belong

here too," she said.

Often, if a woman succeeds in these fields, her academic accomplishments are ignored and her success is attributed solely to her gender, Browner said.

"You get told that if you're getting an A, you're getting that grade because of inappropriate relations with the professor or because they need to keep a quota of females," she said.

A study done by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2011 revealed that a quarter of workers in science, technology, engineering and math fields were women.

This kind of disparity may deter women from pursuing degrees that would lead to those professions, Browner said.

Eryn Baumgartner, a third-year electrical engineering major, said that by the time she gets to the job market, she will be used to being a minority.

"It's just going to push me to try harder," she said.

Madison Holmes can be reached at managing@theorion.com or [gmawriter](https://twitter.com/gmawriter) on Twitter.

Index		Inside		Opinion	Sports	Features
Connections	A2	Sports	B+	Opinion	After missing the playoffs, the softball team finds position.	Students in a gender and communications class march downtown for change in the world.
Weather	A2	Directory	B+	Opinion	Story B3	Story B3
Police Report	A4	Features	B+	Opinion	Column A4	
Opinion	A6	See Column	B+	Opinion		

LIVE EVERYDAY LIKE IT'S **ORION DAY** THEORION.COM