



## NEWS RELEASE

### For further information contact:

Ryan Brown  
Head of Community & Media Relations  
Phone: 541-552-6186  
Cell: 541-591-3352  
brownr2@sou.edu

Phyllis Stiles, Director  
Bee Campus USA & Bee City USA  
Phone: 828-545-4282  
beecityusa@gmail.com

### For immediate release:

### SOU to Be Named Nation's First "Bee Campus USA"

(Ashland, Ore.) —On April 8, 2015, Southern Oregon University and Bee City USA will announce the launch of the national [Bee Campus USA](#) program, designed to marshal the strengths of college campuses for the benefit of pollinators. The University collaborated with Bee City USA on developing the guidelines for certification after being inspired by two of the early adopters of Bee City USA—SOU's hometown of Ashland, and neighboring Talent.

College students, faculty, administrators, and staff have long been among the nation's most stalwart champions for sustainable environmental practices. In embracing the recommendations of the University's Sustainability Council, President Roy Saigo said, "We are very proud to become the first certified Bee Campus USA in the nation. After careful review, our campus leadership agreed that fulfilling the commitments of the program aligned perfectly with and expanded upon initiatives to sustain pollinators that were already underway. This program will help the University, our students, and our community to be better environmental stewards."

### **The Plight of Pollinators**

Said Bee City USA director, Phyllis Stiles, "Hard-working pollinators are responsible for about every third bite we eat, and 85 percent of the world's flowering plant species need a pollinator's help in order to reproduce. Recognizing the serious threats faced by the thousands of species of

bees, butterflies, bats, beetles, and hummingbirds that make our planet bloom and fruit, we feel very fortunate to have found such an outstanding partner in pollinator protection.”

### **Ways Campuses Can Help Pollinators**

Stiles continued, “Southern Oregon University has already begun modeling many of the practices Bee City USA wants to see become a national movement. A student group maintains a pollinator-friendly garden, the campus includes herbicide-free wildlife areas, and the Bee Campus USA Subcommittee of the Sustainability Council began meeting last year. The University’s landscaping services department has established two new native pollinator friendly beds. They have even identified plant suppliers who don't use neonicotinoid pesticides-- insecticides that are absorbed by the entirety of the treated plant and believed by leading scientists to compromise honeybees' immune systems and disrupt their ability to learn and find their way back to their hives.”

To celebrate being named both a Bee Campus USA and a Tree Campus USA on the same day, SOU will plant hundreds of native plants and trees throughout its 175-acre landscape. However, the University recognizes that this is just the beginning. Landscape Services Supervisor, Mike Oxendine reported, "We are committed to developing a Campus Pollinator Habitat Plan that will include a native plant list and suppliers of those plants, along with a least-toxic Integrated Pest Management Plan to be shared on the web as a tool for the community at large."

### **Universities In Unique Position to Raise Awareness**

Jamie Hickner, an SOU Teaching Supervisor and Sustainability Council member is excited about "hosting annual campus events to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators and to celebrate our university's certification as a Bee Campus USA." Furthermore, the University will encourage student service learning projects to enhance pollinator habitats both on and off campus.

As professional educators, college campuses are ideal for offering courses to students or providing continuing education credits for professionals. As a Bee Campus USA, SOU must either offer a Pollinator Ecology course, or conduct workshops on Integrated Pest Management or Landscaping for Pollinators, targeted at pesticide applicators and landscape designers.

Each certified campus also is expected to post educational signage in appropriate places. For example signs in the cafeteria might explain the role of pollinators in food production. And they are also asked to maintain a webpage to share news about their pollinator protection activities. Like Bee City USA communities, each certified campus must reapply each year and report on accomplishments from the previous year.

Other institutions of higher education are invited to explore completing the application process outlined [here](#). ([Application in Word](#)).

## **About Southern Oregon University**

Southern Oregon University provides outstanding student experiences, valued degrees, and successful graduates. SOU is known for excellence in faculty, intellectual creativity and rigor, quality and innovation in connected learning programs, and the educational benefits of its unique geographic location. SOU was the first university in Oregon—and one of the first in the nation—to offset 100 percent of its energy use with clean, renewable power, and it is the first university in the nation to balance 100% of its water consumption. Visit [sou.edu](http://sou.edu).

## **About Bee City USA**

Bee City USA® urges municipalities, individuals, organizations, corporations, and communities to promote and establish pollinator-friendly landscapes that are free of pesticides. Since its inception in Asheville, North Carolina in 2012, five more cities have been certified and about fifty more are in the process of preparing applications. For more information about the application process for becoming a Bee City USA community, visit [beecityusa.org](http://beecityusa.org).