Institutional Message:

The sculpture being installed by Chris Drury on the university campus was selected and approved by the Campus Art Committee. Susan Moldenhauer, Director of the University Art Museum, stated, "Consistent with most of the outdoor art pieces all over campus and the Laramie community, the selected artist is given latitude and discretion to create their own work. The selection was based upon the reputation of the artist, his prior work, and media."

The specifics of the artists' message for the piece was not known to, or a consideration of, the Campus Art Committee. The intent of the Drury sculpture attempts to draw together two natural resources from Wyoming in a formal structure. That was the basis of the selection. The work is part of the larger *Sculpture: A Wyoming Invitational* exhibition that was initiated to challenge, inspire and educate students while engaging them in interdisciplinary discussion and dialogue.

President Buchanan noted, "The University has and will promote a robust marketplace of ideas." President Buchanan added, "It is important to acknowledge that the artist's message is not embraced by all; nor should it be. The installation of campus art is not an endorsement of whatever message the sculptor or viewers might hold, nor is the university in the business of interpreting the sculpture for others.

It is important to discuss differing points of view, ideas, inspiration, and concepts, whether they originate from art or science.

UW has been extraordinarily fortunate in the support it has received from a broad range of partners to advance all kinds of research, including energy research. We look forward to continuing our relationships because they result in good work that will extend the use of Wyoming's energy resource well into the future and preserve the lifestyle we all enjoy in Wyoming."

OP-ED (not released)**, TB**

There has been quite a ruckus the last few days about a new piece of temporary outdoor art on the UW campus. Somehow the ruckus seems out of proportion. There is a small area, near Old Main, where an artist has a project going with a bunch of logs. It's abstract. It's part of a program that has placed sculptures around Laramie and on the UW campus for the last few years. The sculptures come and go. I really liked the giant earthworm — another abstract sculpture near the interstate in West Laramie, and the abstract piece that used to be in front of the Community Rec. Center. In my opinion that piece was very well done. How can an abstract sculpture and the inspiration of an artist cause such a stir?

We all know the controversy has nothing to do with the art work and everything to do with ideas. Comments made about the sculpture have used words like forest management, coal, climate, beetle kill timber, and change. The reactions have been fierce: It's outrageous. Isn't there some public accountability here? I object to the use of public money for something that I might not agree with. How dare you? It's amazing that one piece of art — among so many — so effectively trumps all of UW's other scientific, research, and workforce development commitments, at least in some people's perceptions. Wait a minute.

UW has more than 40 advisory boards, including an Art Museum Advisory Board. There are hundreds of members, from all walks of life, who serve as volunteers on these boards and they don't always share the same opinions. What they do share in common is a love for the University of Wyoming and what it stands for. You know, if you check it out, you'll find that industry has for many years been well represented on that Art Board, as on other UW boards. I attend almost all of their meetings, and I do know that the Art board is one of our very best. We are indebted for their time and their commitment and especially for the sense of balance that they bring to the job.

And let's put this in perspective. A decade ago, there was almost no attention paid to industry at the University of Wyoming. Today, if you come to campus to see the "outrageous" art, you might stop by Old Main and check out the award winning painting by one of our art students of an oil reservoir, or you might want to walk a couple of hundred yards further and check out the $25 million dollar School of Energy Resources that's under construction. We've added degree programs, faculty, student scholarships, equipment, laboratories, and major capital construction in support of building energy and natural resource programs at UW. To say that the State and UW have committed hundreds of millions of dollars to advance Wyoming's economy is no exaggeration. So let's put reactions in perspective. Let's make a commitment to focus our time and attention on stuff that matters and things that make a positive difference. By the way, cutting edge research to advance the use of, and add value to, Wyoming natural resources is one of them. So, is vibrant support of the arts — including works that you like and works that you don't.

Universities are about ideas. And when we start selectively squashing them simply because they're controversial or because of who pays our salaries we stop being a university — because we start losing people's trust in our commitment to do our job. No one sends their students to UW to shield them from new ideas. Universities are about learning how to critically evaluate ideas for yourself. Our students are smart enough to do that. Period.

I get some real tough questions on my desk from time to time. This isn't one of them. Let's see the finished product. I can make my own decisions about whether or not I like it, and you don't have to agree. I've seen world class abstract art and I've seen junk. I'll make up my own mind; I invite you to do the same. I do know this - the internal inspiration of one artist does not distract from the science being conducted in an adjacent building. Please come visit campus sometime soon. We've got a lot of great things going on, including a *lot* of art, and we'd like to show you around.

Selected Legislative Questions/Responses:

1. Did the topic reach the Trustees before funding? No.

2. Describe the selection process. The approval for the artist was made by the Campus Public Art Committee and approved by President Buchanan. This is an internal invitation process, not unlike the selection of featured artists, musicians, theater performances, etc.

3. Were other artists challenged to provide an opposing piece of art? This question presumes that UW sought out a sculpture with a climate change/energy/forest, etc. message. That is not the case. The subject matter, political viewpoints or political inspiration was not a criterion of the selection. The UW Museum Director and Campus Art Committee selected the artist, by invitation, based upon the artist's accomplished career, prior work, reputation, (and other factors). Drury is an internationally recognized and sought after "land artist" whose work makes macroscopic/microscopic connections in Nature. There were no explicit linkages to climate change, etc. at the time of selection. In fact, at the time of the invitation to the artist, the general thought was that the sculpture would be located near the American Heritage Center.

4. **Were opposing pieces of art sought?** No, because the sculpture was not selected on the basis of any political statement. There are examples all over campus of art that was inspired by their creators during creation and after commissioning. This is a natural part of the artistic/creation process. After Chris Drury was selected, he came to campus, visited with students and faculty, traveled around the area and refined his concept.

Additionally, some have asked about balance of inspiration in the sculptures on campus. One of the original artworks in the *Sculpture: A Wyoming Invitational* exhibition embraces the balance between mining and landscape. Charles Parson's *Molto Allargondo*—the long I-beam work along the south side of Prexie's Pasture-- integrates the industry, history, and geography of Wyoming with its landscape. For example, the steel materials reference mining, the white line along its horizon references the Snowy Mountains, etc.

5. **Can a process be established for controversial pieces to be identified/debated by the Trustees in advance?** Since the inspiration of the artist was not developed prior to commissioning, it would be difficult to get inside the mind of the artist and predict what his or her inspiration would be six months later.

The Trustees may not be the appropriate place to approve every temporary art piece, painting exhibition, musical or theatrical performance in an effort to avoid offense or public discomfort.

Cost. There is $75,000 for outdoor art this year. It came from $50,000 private funding and $25,000 Cultural Trust fund. (Original reports, by UW Museum reversed the source of this funding split.)

Outline of selection. A quick summary of the time line for selecting Chris Drury might be worthwhile.

2008 – Initial discussions held between UW Museum Director, Susan Moldenhauer, and Chris Drury to gauge his interest in coming to Laramie to construct a sculpture. (Susan was interested in Chris Drury based upon a "cloud chamber" he constructed for Vanderbilt University.) Chris indicated that he had other projects on-going and did not have time to consider anything in Laramie at this time.

UW initiated a series of outdoor art exhibitions since the UW Art Museum was under renovation. The idea was to move displays out to campus, especially during the renovation so that the museum would not be closed for the year-long renovation and in response to the increasing interest both on campus and off of having public art in our community.

2010 – The UW Art Museum completed its renovation a couple years earlier and there was some uncertainty whether the outdoor initiative would continue. In early summer (**May, 2010**) the UW Art Museum received a $50,000 anonymous gift for outdoor art. As a result, there was interest in leveraging this gift with funds from the Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund (WCTF) to continue with two or three additional outdoor sculptures.

UW submitted a request to the WCTF and received a part of their request ($25,000). Although a few of the potential artists were in mind, as you can see from the grant submission WCTF, like UW, was not aware of the type of artwork or inspiration for any forthcoming piece when the award was approved.

Chris Drury was invited to construct a sculpture sometime after the grant was approved – roughly fall of 2010.

In November 2010, Chris Drury was invited to visit campus, travelled to campus, and discussed the location of a sculpture. Initially, the sculpture was going to be located adjacent to the Art Museum, but the Campus Art Committee suggested a more prominent placement closer to the heart of campus. Again, at this stage, the type of sculpture was not defined. In fact, some on campus wanted to host one of Chris Drury's chambers, consistent with his Vanderbilt work.

During his visit, Chris met with students, faculty, and the Art Committee. He spent a couple days in Laramie considering what he might construct. During the visit, the location was confirmed and the creative process began to define what type of sculpture would be created.

2011 – By the spring of 2011 Chris Drury had forwarded sketches of his creation. In March 2011, the UW Art Museum publicly announced a short description of the sculpture Chris Drury intended to construct. That announcement still resides on-line and references the title of the sculpture, materials used, and a high level summary. There is no mention of climate change. The release is reproduced below:

> The University of Wyoming Art Museum is planning to add several new works to the public art exhibition, *Sculpture: A Wyoming Invitationa*l this summer. The first is by British artist Chris Drury, who will be on site in July to create a new work for the University of Wyoming.

> *Carbon Sink* continues Drury's ongoing exploration of making connections between such diverse phenomena as Nature and Culture, Inner and Outer, and Microcosm and Macrocosim. *Carbon Sink* will be constructed from Wyoming coal and Wyoming beetle-killed pine which will be collected from the southeastern region of Wyoming. The work will connect the geologic and economic importance of Wyoming coal with the current pine beetle infestation surrounding Laramie, commenting on the evolution of the geological and natural cycle of life. The work will be 12 m in diameter on a site near Old Main on the UW campus.
>
> Drury is one of Britain's leading Land Artists. Originating in the US in the 1960s-70s, Land Art promotes the use of natural and found materials for the creation of large-scale and often site-specific artworks in the landscape and in remote locations. In 1974, Drury made a 12-day trek in the Canadian Rockies with a pioneer of Land Art, Hamish Fulton, an experience that focused his creative pursuits.
>
> *Carbon Sink* is made possible through an anonymous donor and the Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund.

While this statement mentions coal and pine beetle infestation, it fails to include the discussion of critical element of climate change.

On Tuesday, July 12th the UW Museum publicist prepared the UW media release on this sculpture. She posted it on the UW Museum web page and forwarded it to Institutional Communications who released the story to the media.