

## **Planet Blue presents first Distinguished Citizen Award**

Planet Blue presented Jan Buswinka with the first Planet Blue Distinguished Citizen Award. She was recognized for her idea of implementing automatic controls for the fume hoods in the Atrium teaching labs which is saving both energy and money in the Chemistry building. The Distinguished Citizen award is designed to recognize those Planet Blue citizens that helped to reduce the environmental footprint of this campus through their unique energy saving ideas. During the award ceremony, Professor Mark Meyerhoff, Chair of the Chemistry Department, congratulated Ms. Buswinka on her efforts, but also encouraged other staff in the building to be proactive in saving energy and money.

These ideas are a direct result of the active engagement between building staff and Planet Blue teams. Energy engineers from Plant Operations, worked with Ms. Buswinka, Planet Blue Teams, and OSEH (Occupational Safety and Environmental Health) to develop the energy conservation measure. Plant Operations staff installed the equipment. Sensors in the teaching labs immediately turn on fume hoods and lights when motion or sound is detected and will continue to operate the equipment as long as motion and sounds of students and staff are detected. When no occupancy is sensed for 10 minutes, the fume hoods and lights will turn off, instantly saving electricity and steam.

In the lower atrium of the Chemistry building, there are total of 14 labs with 9-to-12 fume hoods in each lab. The completion of this energy conservation project resulted in annual savings of \$170,000 in utility costs for the Chemistry Building.

Fume hoods are necessary safety features in many laboratories, but they are very costly to operate. The heating and cooling of air that only flow once-through the space consumes more electricity and steam than in regular offices or classrooms. Automatic controls of fume hoods are most applicable in teaching labs. Applications in research labs are limited.

