

Wanted: friends for foreigners

By Marianne Chin
Of the Emerald

Susan Lee and Jerome Sayre are playing matchmakers this fall.

But they don't run a computer dating service. They're volunteer coordinators for the International Friendship Program, where they work to facilitate meetings between foreign and American students.

"It's always a problem for foreign students to meet Americans," says Jackie Uhler, faculty adviser for the American English Institute, the program's sponsor.

The AEI is an intensive English program for foreign students who enter the University or other academic institutions. In the program, American students from the University and AEI students fill out questionnaires and are paired up according to similar interests.

American students also indicate which country they are interested in learning about. The majority of AEI students come from Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

After the match-up, the students usually meet once or twice a week for activities such as touring the campus and city or just having coffee and talking, says Lee, a University sophomore. Students also participate in AEI-sponsored activities, such as dances, trips and sports.

"We want to help foreign students meet Americans and promote international friendships," Uhler says.

Lee and Sayre have spent the last few weeks distributing flyers, holding informational meetings and visiting foreign language and AEI classes. About 25 Americans and 30 foreign students have signed up for the program.

"We can always use more students," Uhler says. Both Lee and Sayre participated in the program last year before becoming coordinators this fall.

Lee, an international marketing major interested in Japanese culture, paired up with a student from Japan last year. "She really helped me with my Japanese homework," Lee says.

"It's a way to introduce America to other



Photo courtesy of American English Institute

The Friendship program sponsors activities, such as dances, trips and sports.

cultures," Sayre says. "We're just trying to get people together," he says.

Both say playing matchmaker has taken a lot of their time these last few weeks, but both emphasize the many benefits of involvement in the program.

"I'm having a good time helping other people and it's fun," Lee says.

Students interested in joining the program can contact Lee at 485-9506 or Sayre at 345-9163.

Task force works on minority relations

By Jim Moore
Of the Emerald

Minority students need to open communication within the various ethnic groups on campus as well as the rest of the University, says Tess Brasser, director of the newly formed Minority Task Force at the University.

Brasser, a third-year law student who also works for the district attorney's office, already has brought together five minority groups to one general meeting, and she has another planned for Wednesday.

Ideally, the task force will attract at least two members from each University minority group, Brasser says. From those volunteers she will form subcommittees to research issues.

Brasser, chair of Lane County's Citizen Involvement Committee and commissioner of both the Committee for the Rights of Minorities and the Committee for the Rights of Youth, says she wants the task force to tackle "workable issues."

And the "workable issues" she has in mind, the University placement office, University recruitment procedures and the recently adopted cluster system, are ready for research as soon as subcommittees are formed, she says.

Brasser wants to examine the procedures used by the placement office, which finds jobs for University students, to ensure minorities have the same employment opportunities as other students.

She also wants a committee to determine whether the University actively recruits minority students.

But it's the third issue, the cluster program, that Brasser says

she expects to change first.

The University's cluster system requires students to fulfill graduation requirements by taking their choice of three classes in three different "cluster" areas.

However, none of those cluster groups contains ethnic studies, and Brasser intends to change that.

"If nothing else, at the end of my tenure (as Minority Task Force Director), I want to say ethnic studies are part of the clusters," Brasser says.

Her tenure probably will last through May when she graduates from law school, she says. And she wants results by then.

"I want to get things done," Brasser says.

In fact, she is so committed to getting things done she is donating her time to get the task force off the ground.

"She wanted to be director so bad she put aside salary," says ASUO Pres. Mary Hotchkiss.

The formation of the task force stems from Hotchkiss' campaign last spring, when she said the University needed a Minority Task Force.

"I think it's good this new administration thinks the task force is important," Brasser says.

And Hotchkiss is happy Brasser wants to be part of the task force.

"Considering that this issue — the problems and advantages of minority students — has not been addressed, we needed someone of Tess' intelligence, energy and ability," Hotchkiss says.

Another person who's happy about Brasser is Art Broncheau, co-director of the Native American Student Union. The minority groups have all the elements

necessary to make their grievances known and accomplish positive things, Broncheau says.

And Brasser is the catalyst, he says.

"It's up to us (the minority groups) to make it work," Broncheau says.

Brasser echoes that thought. "We're going to get done as much as we're willing to get done," she says.

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