

Foreign programs give view of world

By Jolayne Houtz
Of the Emerald

Instead of enduring the rain and mudpuddles of another Oregon winter, how about spending the rest of the year abroad?

The University's foreign studies program offers exchanges to 12 countries and tuition is equivalent to what the student pays per term at the University, says Paul Primak, foreign study adviser.

Eligibility requirements differ for each exchange, Primak says.

Students traveling to Beijing, China only need to have sophomore standing with a 2.5 grade point average and no foreign language prerequisites.

'Moving from the American culture to any foreign culture requires a person who can bend a little.'

— Paul Primak

Students exchanging to Seville, Spain need a 3.0 GPA with two years of college-level Spanish, and Russia-bound students need junior standing and three years of Russian.

There are subjective requirements as well, which are determined from an interview which Primak often conducts "on a one-to-one basis, where we talk about goals, academic background, parental support, things like that. It's approached in low key."

"We look for an ability to adapt, a high motivation," he says. "Moving from the American culture to any foreign culture requires a person who is willing to bend a little bit."

The reason for screening is

not to eliminate students, Primak says, but to make sure that students' needs and what the program offers are compatible.

The program started in 1976 when 30 students went abroad to study. This year, the program hopes to send from 275 to 300 students to the various countries participating in the program, Primak says.

"There's been a steady increase. In the space of eight years, we've really seen the programs come together," he says.

The most popular places are France and Germany, where Primak hopes to send 75 students each during the upcoming year.

He credits these country's popularity to the strong language departments the University has in those languages.

The University grants credit for courses taken through the exchange program. In most cases, University course numbers and titles are assigned to the work completed overseas, and this credit appears on the transcript.

Students pay either in-state or out-of-state tuition during their stay, depending on their status at the University as well as transportation, living and personal expenses.

All enrolled students are eligible for a variety of financial aid, however, ranging from Pell grants and Guaranteed Student Loans to built-in scholarship programs, depending on the country, Primak says.

"It's important for students to realize that it (the exchange program) involves both an academic and a learning experience. Learning comes as much from outside the classroom as inside — in my mind, it's as important as the academic experience," Primak says.

While they are abroad, students stay either with local families or in dormitories provided by the University they are attending.

"The home stays are really good because the families allow a way to gently prod the student into the culture," he says.

For certain programs, namely Avignon, France; London, England; Cologne, Germany; and Guadalajara, Mexico, professors from the Northwest accompany the students and teach most of their courses in English.

In other countries, classes are taught in the language of the host country.

In general, students join the program for language proficien-

cy and culturally oriented courses, Primak says.

"It's very liberal-arts oriented, and the program lends itself perfectly to that," he says.

There also is a program for faculty members interested in positions as resident directors or teachers for certain programs next fall in Baden-Wurttemberg, West Germany; Tokyo, Japan; Beijing, China; Poitiers, France; Linkoping, Sweden; and Bergen, Norway.

"We encourage the faculty to take advantage of the program," Primak says, noting that faculty members previously involved in the exchange program are not only from the language depart-

ment but also from history, literature and many other disciplines.

Deadlines vary for different countries, with some operating each term and others only twice a year, Primak says.

Interested students should contact the Office of International Services in Room 330 Oregon Hall, 686-3206.

"In some ways, you have to be willing to become a child again because you're quite helpless in a foreign country," Primak says. "But anybody that's willing to put their nose to the grindstone will succeed beyond anyone's expectations for them."

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...especially
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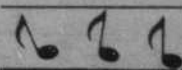
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