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In Touch with the International Student Assoc.

Oregon has worldwide appeal

It may be hard to believe at times, but people actually come from all over the globe to get a degree from the University. The following students, who are from faraway continents and exotic locales, summarized their experiences so far in terms of schoolwork, life in Eugene and reminiscences of home.

ATOSA SALEHI, Iran

Salehi, who has been in the United States for five years now, started out at Indiana University in Bloomington before transferring to the University of Oregon.

"A friend who had graduated from Oregon State said that Eugene is very liveable, and I always wanted to live on the West Coast," she said. "I'm an outdoors person, so I like the nature here. And the people in Eugene are more open to foreigners; they're friendlier."

"In Indiana," she added, "there was more of a closed community, so it was more difficult to find friends."

After she graduates in June, Salehi plans to go to medical school and work toward a career as a doctor. She hopes to stay in the states to practice medicine, mainly because opportunities for women in Iran are very limited.

"Women there are much too inferior to men," she said. "They can't be judges, pilots or anything that has to do with the government. Women can't even swim in the sea with men there. If you go swimming, you can't even go with your husband."

Salehi said she drops by the International Coffee Hour, held every Friday afternoon in the International Student Lounge, because "it's a good place for students to meet each other."

"Unfortunately," she added, "I don't see a lot of American students there. Maybe they don't think an international coffee hour is supposed

to be for them, but to us, American students are international."

JIFFIN ARBOLEDA, Philippines

Arboleda, 23, is a graduate student in the journalism school. She was given a scholarship and a Graduate Teaching Fellowship from the University, and she started school here just last term.

"Eugene is my only American experience so far, and it's been a nice change of pace from where I used to live," she said. "The pace is much faster there."

Arboleda hopes to become a working journalist and teach at the same time, so she can teach the theories and back it up with what she's learned in the field, she said.

The most vivid advantage to going to school here over the Philippines is the amount of up-to-date resources available here, she said.

"We had a big library there, but all the books were outdated. When I was in undergraduate school (1983 to 1987), the textbooks we were using were from the '60s and '70s," Arboleda said. "The problem is, if I go back and become a teacher, how can I teach at the same level there if we don't have the same resources?"

ULI FAUL, West Germany

Faul, 27, has been in the states since the summer of 1988, working on his doctorate in physics. His first experience here was a month-long rafting trip down the Grand Canyon, which he said was one of

the best times of his life. "All the other people on the trip were Americans, and I really got to know them, because we were away from everything and everyone," Faul said.

He said that while university students in Germany are at an advantage money-wise — no one has to pay tuition — he likes the fact that here students can work more closely with professors.

"Professors are much more accessible here," he said. "In Germany it's a lot harder to interact with them, because most of them have secretaries and you have to knock on the secretary's door first to see if (the professor) has time to see you."

Faul said he enjoys life here more and more every day, and he thinks he may stay in the states after graduation.

"People here are very open. I was hitchhiking for part of the summer from Durango, Colo., to Eugene, and most people I met on the way were really nice and seemed to be more open to foreigners."

RICARDO GONZALEZ, Venezuela

Gonzalez has only been at the University for six months, and he said he didn't even really choose to come here.

He said he received a scholarship for enrollment in an MBA program in America, and was told to choose a school or an area of the country he'd like to live in.

"So I asked about Harvard or Stanford, and they told me to be realistic," he said. "Then I didn't know what to say, so they chose this for me."

"But I love the people in Eugene," he added. "It's a nice small, liberal city. The MBA program here is one of the best, at least on the west



IDA HERSI, East Africa

Hersi, a sophomore majoring in biology, said her initial impression of America was nothing like she thought it would be.

"All I'd seen about America was from T.V.," she explained. "So I thought everything would be more glamorized, with big cities everywhere. I thought life would be like you see it in the movies, so it was very different from my expectations."

Hersi, who moved here two years ago, plans to go on to medical school after graduation. She wants to eventually become a doctor in either Asia or Africa, she said.

Four of her sisters and brothers are also in the United States studying and working, but they are on the east coast, Hersi said. She misses her family life back home more than anything else, because she said her culture places more emphasis on family bonding.

"We value the family very much; we have an extended family system," she said. "At home everybody in the community knows each other. It's a close knit society, where here it's more individualistic."

—Daria Jackson

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