

# Peacekeepers to teach 'respect'

By Tammy Batey  
Emerald Associate Editor

Respect. Singer Aretha Franklin wanted it and University students will be taught how to give it through a new class this fall called the Peacekeeper Program.

Peacekeeper Program instructor Thom Alberti, a staff member of Eugene PeaceWorks, said the class will teach students how to deal with conflict peacefully and how to respect the opinions of others.

"Often when we deal with conflictive situations, we tend to disrespect the opposing group or individual," Alberti said. "If there was one word to describe this class, it would be 'respect.' If you respect other people's ideas, you're starting off on the right foot."

No matter how peaceful students are, they're bound to encounter conflict, Alberti said. The class will instruct students on how to deal with all sorts of conflict-filled situations, from a riot to an argument with a roommate.

The class will require a high level of participation, Alberti said. It will include role-playing sessions, guest speakers and two weekend workshops.

Caitlin Twain, ASUO safety affairs coordinator, said she first had the idea of creating a peacekeeper class after the Eugene riot that followed the acquittal of four white Los Angeles police officers in the beating of black motorist Rodney King.

Following the riot, 20 students and administrators took a crash course in peacekeeping. Twain, who took the crash course, said it was "insightful" and taught her about the dynamics of the relationship between police and students.

"We thought it would be a good idea if we could decrease the role of police," she said.

The idea of students taking on the role of "peacekeepers" came from Eugene PeaceWorks. During the Gulf War, 75 peacekeepers from the organization kept a 24-hour watch at the Federal Building to make sure tensions didn't explode into violence, Alberti said.

Peacekeeper Program members will confront their own racism, homophobia and sexism, Twain said.

"I feel like the class won't be successful without a really diverse group of students," she said. "Clearly, if we have a bunch of any one group, it's not going to come off right because the community is diverse."

Police officers, peace activists and ethnic student union members are among some of the people who will speak to the class, Twain said.

Twain said she hopes class members will use the peacekeeping skills they learn to help defuse conflict at parties and student activities.

Police will know the names of students who've taken the class and will recognize they're there to help in conflict situations involving students, Twain said.

The Office of Public Safety is funding the class. OPS Director Carey Drayton said he likes the idea of students learning to deal with conflict.

"I think it's great," he said. "It's a fantastic way of doing business. I hear all the time that society could police itself, but I've been in this line of work 15 years and I've never seen it happen."

Students have until Friday to register for the peacekeeper class through Duck Call. The two-credit class is taught pass/no pass and begins Saturday, Oct. 24. Usual meeting times are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

The ASUO department of safety affairs, University mediation program and the Office of Public Safety are sponsoring the Peacekeeper Program.

# Researchers develop social skills programs

By Demian McLean  
Emerald Reporter

While Measure 5 may have reduced the University's education department, education remains a strong theme among researchers at the University's Center for Human Development.

Professors, graduate students and undergraduate students work daily at the center to teach people with developmental disabilities ways to function more independently in the community.

Developmental disabilities can include mild to severe retardation, speech or hearing impairments, and abusive home environments.

Running mainly on federal funds since 1971, the center is a research institute with the mission of increasing the independence and productivity of people with developmental disabilities.

Researchers at the center approach this goal with a wide range of strategies and apply them to people of all ages, from infants to adults.

Professor Robert Horner heads the center's Specialized Training program, which deals with adolescents and adults who are moderately to severely mentally retarded.

"These are kids that have been excluded in past decades," Horner said of his subjects, who often behave anti-socially, biting classmates and eating harmful objects such as coins.

"The solution used to be to put them in an institution," Horner said. "In the past 10 years, we've seen that strategy has failed. When you exclude kids from their peers, they don't learn," he said.

Along with graduate students and other professors, Horner devises ways for these people to develop social skills inside society. This includes helping schools deliver the educational support a disabled individual needs.

These are steps in what Horner says is the larger goal: to enable these people

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