

Graduates set out to Teach For America

By Carrie Vincent
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

Four recent graduates of the University will be headed to California, Texas or Louisiana next fall to teach for a Peace Corps style education program called Teach For America.

Matt Coleman, Dave Harkin, Bryant Howard and Dustin Stuhr have committed two years to some of the nation's most beleaguered schools that suffer acute teacher shortages.

The program, now in its third year, seeks to recruit enthusiastic, high-energy college graduates who will inspire interest in teaching profession and give all children an equal chance to higher standards of education.

In an interview with *Time* magazine in 1990, 24-year-old founder Wendy Kopp said she hoped the unorthodox approach will boost the low status of the profession and help alleviate the growing teaching shortage.

A seed grant of \$26,000 in 1990 helped turn TFA into a reality. Through an aggressive letter writing campaign, Kopp convinced more than 200 corporations to donate \$12 million, including \$3 million from Phillip Morris. Even Ross Perot contributed \$500,000.

To be a member of TFA, each applicant must attain a bachelor's degree, have a 2.5 GPA or better upon graduation, pass the National Teacher's Exam, attend an intensive six-week training course at UCLA and maintain a high level of energy and interaction with the children, which is helped by weekend TFA seminars and a second-summer training course.

New corps members are given positions that relate to your degrees. Coleman will teach secondary physical science and Howard will teach elementary spe-

cial education in Oakland, Calif. Harkin will teach high school English rural Louisiana. Stuhr will teach elementary special education in Austin, Texas.

TFA tries to place applicants according to the applicant's request. Stuhr admitted he would have preferred rural Texas, but he is still excited, if not a little nervous about the whole thing.

"This is my big life transition, my soul-seeking opportunity," Stuhr said. "A lot of my friends are still looking for it, so I feel pretty fortunate I've had this opportunity. I've gotten to the point where I realize that things like this that scare me are probably good for me."

TFA attempts to match individuals to locations that are similar to, or at least familiar to the applicant's past living experiences.

Howard, who is from northeast Portland, said his taste of "inner-city" living qualifies him for his assignment.

"Even if I wasn't (qualified), my enthusiasm will carry me through," he said.

TFA pays for the six-week training session at UCLA this summer, the plane ticket to the teaching destination and one week compensation to find a place to live. The program also offers short-term loans until the first paychecks come in. TFA teachers are paid on salary by the district they will work in.

But money is not the issue for Harkin. "I didn't come out of college with big loans to make \$30,000 a year," said Harkin, who will pursue his accredited teaching certificate while in Louisiana. "I came out wanting to teach."

"I'm a little nervous and a little scared to move away from everything that is familiar to me. I'm intimidated by the culture change," said Harkin, who has never been to Louisiana. "But I've seen it on the movies, and it looks neat."

Coleman also said that the new location might be intimidating.

"I'm a white, middle-class American and I'm going into an urban setting where I will be a minority," he said. "It will be a challenge in terms of relating... but I'm very excited about the challenge."

Coleman said much of his fears have been alleviated because TFA has placed more than 100 of this year's 600 members in Oakland.

"The support base is good," he said.

In the three-year history of the program, this is the first time TFA has recruited out of Oregon. John Miller, the west coast regional director for TFA, said this is purely a logistical matter.

There are not as many schools in Oregon that have the same needs and problems that TFA serves, according to Miller.

Miller admitted that TFA's limited resources have also excluded Oregon in the past from recruiting trips. But Miller seemed genuinely pleased by the interest he saw in Oregon.

"We had to extend our interviews to four days because we had so many applicants from Oregon," he said.

TFA received more than 2,500 applications in 1993 and has an acceptance rate of about 22 percent.

Miller hopes the heightened interest about TFA in Oregon will allow for active recruiting trips here in the future.

About 40 percent of TFA teachers continue to teach after their two-year commitment is finished, Miller said. Even if they don't continue to teach, Miller seemed to echo the belief of many in saying that TFA alumni will continue to offer their skills and energy to promote equal opportunity education for all children.

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said. The fund pays debt on bonds issued on student union construction projects.

Over the life of this fund, the EMU has only received \$1.4 million for construction projects. Capital needed to begin the rest of the EMU renovation would cost more than \$6 million, Miller said.

"We at the EMU and University need to be much more aggressive in accessing that money," Miller said. "We really do need a massive infusion of capital from the fund."

He said the EMU has a very good chance to get on the list for state funding.

In the meantime, Miller said he is looking at several non-physical improvements to the University's food service that could be implemented in the two or three years prior to the planned renovations.

Ideas include a breakfast buffet bar and adding "extremely fresh, nutritious food" to the current menu.

LAW

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Research Center, who will teach the rights of Russians class.

To register for the course, students may either call the law school at 346-3853 or come to the law school office a half-hour before class starts. Interested persons may also attend individual lectures without registering, but only on a space available basis.

STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT

If you're feeling the pressure of student loans the Army can help you pay back up to \$55,000.

For more information contact your Army recruiter

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Springfield, OR 97477-1071
747-0048

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Aerobics/Bench	MW	7:00-8:00am	Ger 220	\$25
Aerobics/Bench	UH	7:00-8:00am	Ger 220	\$25
Aerobics	MW	5:30-6:30pm	Ger 220	\$20
Aerobics	UH	5:30-6:30pm	Ger 220	\$20
Weight Training	MW	4:00-5:00pm	Esl 36	\$20
Yoga/Meditation	UH	7:00-8:00pm	Esl 77	\$20
Yoga/Meditation	UH	5:30-6:30pm	Esl 77	\$20

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F 6:30am-5:00pm

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MUWH 6:30am-7:30am

MUWH 12:00pm-1:30pm

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MUWH 7:00am-8:30am

MUWH 11:30am-12:30pm

MUWH 5:00pm-7:00pm

F 3:00pm-4:30pm

GERLINGER POOL

MUWH 5:30pm-6:30pm



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