

Vietnamese delegation visits the University

By Julie Swensen
Oregon Daily Emerald

The highest-ranking delegation of Vietnamese academicians ever to come to the United States is at the University this week, touring the University's facilities to learn ways to update its higher education system, which has suffered under a 19-year trade embargo with the United States.

The five officials — including the chair of Vietnam's National Peace Committee, three top administrators from Vietnamese colleges and universities, and an expert in teaching English as a Second Language — have been meeting with University President Myles Brand, faculty, administrators and students to study U.S. higher education.

Robert Proudfoot, an associate professor of International Studies who has accompanied the delegates, said the visit is an exciting opportunity to do something positive after almost 45 years of war with Vietnam.

"We hope this will open the door to many, many positive things for faculty, students and administrators, and for these pioneers of education from Vietnam who we are also learning a great deal from," he said.

Vu Ngoc Tu, vice president of the University of Hanoi, said that Clinton's lifting of the trade embargo two weeks ago will mean a great deal toward improving Vietnam's education and training.

Tu said most of the learning, research and laboratory facilities at Vietnamese colleges and universities are "very backward." At the University of Hanoi — which is considered to have the most modern laboratory facilities — most of the equipment is about 10 years old, and the school does not have the parts or accessories to replace them.

"The improvement of learning facilities will contribute a lot to the development of the natural economy and society as a whole," Tu said. "What our generation has lost, we know that the next generation will have."

The delegates, who said their first impression of the University was that the campus is "quite big," said the learning environment of the campus is a model for



Dr. Dao Trong Thi (left), President of the University of Hanoi discusses the future of the Vietnamese educational system along with his colleague, Vu Ngoc Tu.

their country.

"The teaching and learning facilities are really wonderful. It is something that we could wish for our future generations," Tu said, adding that he and the other delegates are "deeply moved" by the warm hospitality shown by people at the University.

In addition to visiting the University, the delegates will spend the rest of their 12-day stay in Oregon visiting Oregon State and Portland State universities, statewide community colleges, health care facilities and several English as a Second Language Programs.

The history-making visit is not the first for the University, which is leading the nation in its scholarly ties with Vietnam. Last year, two Vietnamese scholars came to the University, the first visit since the end of the Vietnam War. The scholars, who initially were not allowed to go to the United States and were held up at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, were allowed

through after Proudfoot made a telephone call to Vice President Al Gore.

The University also has been awarded \$376,000 from the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, which will allow for a two-year program that will send five University students to Vietnam this summer to spend seven weeks living in villages. The University students — the only students from the United States — will join students from Japan, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia for the program.

In addition, the University has begun offering a Vietnamese language class for the first time, which probably will generate a lot of interest from students because of the lifting of the trade embargo, said Jiffin Arboleda, outreach coordinator for the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies.

"It makes more sense now for students here to try and learn the language, since there will be more opportunities to go to Vietnam as students — or later on in life when they're working," she said.

Discussion focuses on social differences, stereotypes

By Deirdre Dittman
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

"Society does not promote being open, but tonight we're going to do just that," said Jackie Balzer, coordinator of Educational and Support Services, at the beginning of a discussion Wednesday on "isms."

"Differences Among Us," organized for dorm students, was an effort to break down the stereotypes surrounding categories such as race or sex. Its purpose was to teach participants how differently people feel and how to deal with those differences.

The meeting also was an opportunity to gain some insight into the various "isms" that inhibit people. It gave the chance for a few to share and a few to listen.

Rose Gno, the resident assistant of Stafford Hall and organizer of the event, believed "people weren't looking at cultures openly."

"There are a lot of stereotypes that go around," Gno said. "And people, whether they know it or not, don't realize they're treating people a certain way."

This chance for discussion and education was seen as especially important for the dorm and University newcomers, who must deal with a new environment.

"When new freshmen come to the University, they're thrown into situations they're unfamiliar with," Balzer said.

Topics discussed included racism, sexism, age-ism, spiritualism, able-ism, and homophobia-ism. Each topic was examined by the small, but interested, group in a sharing, open atmosphere in an attempt to find out why these topics scared and intimidated students.

"There should be a lot more stuff like this," junior Ryan Weitzel said. "The more we discuss, the better it will be."

Decision on preservation contested

By Eric Buckhalter
Oregon Daily Emerald

University housing officials have appealed the Eugene Historic Review Board's decision that Amazon family housing structures merit historic preservation.

Housing officials are puzzled by the notion that houses designed and built for temporary use during World War II are worthy of historic status.

The appeal, issued to the Eugene City Council on Feb. 14, outlines four concerns, which are that the Historic Review Board:

- acted as both applicant and judge of whether Amazon structures merit historic preservation

- broadened its analysis of historic designation to ensure that Amazon's preservation was consistent with city policies

- overestimated the landmark's historic significance

- erred in its judgment about the value of preserving Amazon structures

"Historical preservation is not in the best interests of students," said Mike Eyster, director of University housing. "The cost of preservation is too high."

According to an engineering study completed four weeks ago, historic preservation is more expensive than building new units. But Almar Millman, an Amazon resident who has been calculating rent projections with housing officials, said that rent would increase only slightly.

Eyster said that housing administrators are working with student groups to explore the options of either maintaining or replacing Amazon.

Amazon resident Pat Saisi, who wrote the historic preservation petition, said she believes that the proposal proved the neighborhood's historic significance.

She said she believes the arguments of the University's appeal are unfounded.

"The University has one word on its mind, and that's demolish," she said.

The University's appeal will be heard by the City Council on March 7 at 7:30 p.m. in its chambers. The Council has 15 days thereafter to render a decision.

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