

SINGAPORE

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other states."

Leong came to Eugene last year to study business and said she feels cheated by rising costs and cuts in the program.

"The business school has really suffered since the budget cuts," Leong said. "They don't offer some courses anymore, professors have left, and lots of TAs are teaching classes."

Complaints like Leong's are getting back to Singapore and are having an effect on college-bound Singaporeans. Budget cuts and rising tuition costs are just part of the reason Singaporean students, once the largest group of international students on campus, aren't coming to the University anymore.

Singaporeans attending colleges and universities in the United States are increasing at a rate of 3 to 5 percent a year, but the number of Singaporeans studying at the University peaked in

1986 at 368. This was the record for international students from one nation. Since then, the number of Singaporeans at the University has declined dramatically. There are now only about 90 Singaporeans, dropping the group to fifth place among international students, behind the Japanese, Taiwanese, Indonesians and South Koreans.

In general, the number of students from Asia at the University has been on the rise.

Recruiting of non-resident students is a vital part of the University's plan to make up for a \$20-million budget shortfall, said Christopher Simpson, director of the University Office of Communications and Marketing. Every 100 non-residents equal another million dollars in revenue for the University. Increasingly, Asia is seen by the University as a good place to find more non-resident students, he said.

About one-third of the 6,000 non-resident students at the University are international students,

mostly from Asia. Students from Asia account for more than \$10 million in tuition revenue a year.

Despite the dramatic decline in the number of Singaporeans, University officials don't feel this is a sign of things to come with other international students, such as the Japanese, whose numbers have reached 358.

"I kinda doubt it, unless the economy falters or the Japanese build more universities and provide more access," said James R. Buch, director of Admissions. The Japanese and other students from Asia will continue to come to the University for the American experience and an opportunity to get an education, he said.

However, if tuition continues to rise, it will hurt the University's ability to compete with other schools for international and other non-resident students, Simpson said.

The University is still a mid-priced school at \$10,000 a year in tuition, competing well with state schools such as the Univer-

sity of Colorado, which charges non-residents about \$13,000 a year, Simpson said. As long as tuition at the University does not exceed its market price, he said, non-resident students will still come.

"We haven't exceeded it yet, but we are darn close," Simpson said.

The perception that the value of the University is going down is playing a major part in the decision of Singaporeans to go elsewhere. With a \$2,000 increase in out-of-state tuition from last year it is getting harder to justify coming to the University, Singaporean students said.

"It used to be pretty cheap and no sales tax," said sophomore Mervin Chua. Now Chua would encourage other Singaporeans to go to states like Texas where fees and tuition are still low.

Yin Leng Leong, who is getting a second degree at the University, said her cousin wanted to come to Oregon also, but couldn't afford to after last year's large

tuition increase.

The loss of the physical education major was cited by Puan Ratmun, a student adviser at the Singapore Consulate in Los Angeles, as an example of how cuts in programs have decreased the value of the University to students from Singapore.

Cuts and costs are not the only factors which have made it harder for Singaporeans to attend the University.

Some of the other reasons are tougher admission requirements, increased competition from other universities, too many Singaporeans, the lack of nightlife and even the weather.

The first year the University had a decrease in the number of Singaporeans was 1987, coinciding with the University's change in admission requirements.

Since 1987, students from British education systems, such as Singapore, need passing grades in two A-level examinations. This is equivalent to the freshman requirement changed from a high school GPA of 2.75 to 3.0, Buch said.

"Clearly, changing to two A-levels cut out a chunk of students," he said.

The University had been an option for students who could not get admitted to the highly competitive schools in their own country.

But that situation is also changing. A couple of new colleges have opened in Singapore, making it easier for students to attend school in their own country. The University is in addition facing increased competition from colleges and universities in the United States and Australia.

Since the late 1980s, Australian universities have been aggressively recruiting in Singapore and other Asian countries. In a bid for the same brain power and tuition revenues, many U.S. colleges and universities have been doing likewise.

The University relies mainly on word-of-mouth and does not actively recruit in Asia, said Margo Ramsing, an international student adviser from the University Office of International Education and Exchange. However, University officials do keep in contact with alumni from Singapore.

"We ask them to encourage their children and others to come to the University of Oregon," Ramsing said.

There were just too many Singaporeans, at one time. The large Singaporean community at the University made some students feel too much at home.

"The idea of going abroad is to experience a whole new life," Siuk Loon Leong said. "If I wanted to study with Singaporeans I could have stayed home."

Other international students on campus feel the same way.

"I probably wouldn't have chosen the U of O if there were more Japanese here," said Miyuki Paguchi, a sophomore from Japan.

The declining number of Singaporean students might have something to do with Eugene's nightlife, said James Leong, a senior from Singapore.

"It's just a university town, small, not a lot of activities and far from the big cities," Leong said. "I'm getting a good education but I'm not having a good time."

Leong also feels it is hard to adjust to dreary Oregon weather when you're from tropical Singapore.

"I'm paying \$10,000 a year and getting rained on," Leong said.

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