

Seminars offer tips on traveling, working abroad

By Catherine Hours
For The Oregon Daily Emerald

Tips and strategies on how to overcome many of the challenges and obstacles of working and traveling abroad were offered to students in two seminars last week.

The sessions, "Work Abroad" and "Budget Travel," were sponsored by the Council on International Educational Exchange. They attracted about 50 students who wanted to learn about the cheapest ways to travel, how to get the most out of their trips and how to get a job while high unemployment rates all over the world make it extremely difficult to find work opportunities abroad.

CIEE offers a Work Abroad program allowing students to work for three to six months in various countries. Its success over the past 28 years is evidence of the helplessness and confusion that students feel when they have to seek jobs in countries they've never visited or where they have no connections.

Melanie Tyrrel, a senior in political science who plans to go to England after graduation, explained that her

participation in such a program would suppress the annoying aspects of "officialdom" by helping to provide her with visas and work permits.

Indeed, working overseas requires serious preparation. It is time-consuming and students sometimes face a series of obstacles.

For example, the United States is often regarded as a wealthy nation and foreigners may be surprised and skeptical when Americans travel abroad to work. In such a context, internationally-oriented Americans sometimes don't feel welcome.

Moreover, the host of the seminar, Keith Yazmir, campus relations coordinator for the CIEE, noticed that summer jobs are a very American concept and are not that developed elsewhere. European students are more often supported by their governments through scholarships and lower tuitions. Also, many of them live at their parents' home during the summer and don't have to worry about living expenses. Hence, they sometimes don't understand why Americans need to work.

However, motivation remains the applicants' main asset. Yazmir mentioned

the experience of a young man who planned to get a job in Europe over the summer and who was very excited. In the plane on his way to London, the man talked about his hopes. He talked so much and with such enthusiasm that everyone in the seats around him became aware of his situation. By the end of the trip, a man came up to him and hired him to work in his office in downtown London, saying that this person had more energy than he would ever need for his office.

Although there is virtually no restriction on the types of work available to foreign students, applicants must be realistic — especially if their language skills are limited.

Unlike informal kinds of positions such as waiters or salespeople, career-related jobs require some research. For instance, in France, applications must be sent at least six months beforehand. Job hunters will adopt many of the same strategies that they would use at home. Still, they will sometimes need to learn how to write resumes and cover letters adapted to their chosen country.

Daria Crimes, a senior in international

studies who spent six months in Ecuador one year ago, said it took dozens of phone calls from the U.S. before she received a positive answer. She finally found an internship in an environmental law organization in Quito where she did lots of research, translation and field work.

Students will have to use as many sources of information as they can: career services offices, study abroad offices (much like the Office of International Education and Exchange here at the University), professors, and friends.

Americans should also take advantage of their cultural background. Their fluency in English is an obvious example. This skill is highly rated in places like banks, retail stores, and hotels, especially in "touristy" areas. For instance, some are asked to lead tours for English-speaking visitors in wineries in France or Italy.

Nevertheless, for most students, the fact that working abroad allows them to afford their stay is a secondary factor. It is mainly an opportunity for them to experience and gain a new perspective and to get an insider's view of the country and its inhabitants and culture.

ET ALS

MEETINGS

Circle K will meet tonight at 6 in EMU Century Room A.

Public Relations Student Society of America will meet tonight at 7 in Room 301A Allen. For more information, call 346-3738.

MISCELLANEOUS

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Alliance and Women's Diversity will sponsor an internalized homophobia/biphobia workshop tonight from 6 to 9 in Room 142 Straub. For more information, call 346-3360.

ASUO Elections Board will sponsor the ASUO general elections today from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will be voting booths in the Hamilton Cafeteria, at the Knight Library, at Chapman and Condon halls, and at University Street and 15th Avenue. For more information, call 346-0629.

Outdoor Program will present an introduction to whitewater rafting tonight at 7:30 in EMU Suite 37. For more information, call 346-4365.

Career Planning and Placement will offer open sign-ups today for interviews with Merck Human Health, Afterthoughts, The New England and Agio Designs.

Deadline for submitting Et Als to the Emerald front desk, Suite 300 EMU, is noon the day before publication. Et Als run the day of the event unless the event takes place before noon and is requested to be published earlier.

Notices of events with a donation or admission charge will not be accepted. Campus events and those scheduled nearest the publication date will be given priority. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for grammar and style.

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