

# UNIVERSITY

## International students face AIDS awareness in U.S.

By Catherine Hours

For the Oregon Daily Emerald

When they come to the United States, international students have to face new realities and perceptions that sometimes make them question their original education.

This seems to be particularly true as far as AIDS is concerned, since, dealing with sexuality, the disease remains a taboo in many countries.

Ila Ausland, special services coordinator at the Student Health Center, does a lot of counseling for people who get tested for AIDS.

Although not every individual fits into these cultural stereotypes, she was amazed by the curiosity shown by most Asian women, as well as by the open-mindedness of a Saudi Arabian student who consulted her recently. On the other hand, she couldn't establish any profitable contact with a young Finnish man who was completely impassive and unwilling to think about his sexual behavior.

Many international students come here with the idea that AIDS is a typically American phenomenon and that their own country is not concerned by the disease. When some countries officially deny the presence of AIDS among heterosexuals, the result is that many students believe the misinformation they've been fed about the disease.

In Thailand, there is a general belief that the disease is being spread by foreigners. Rahul Pathela, a senior in political science from Bangkok, pointed out that many brothels in his country now impose restrictions not to allow foreigners in.

"The U.S. favors individualism, whereas Thailand is more family-orient-

ed," Pathela said. "Americans may be more educated about AIDS, but they don't put it into practice."

"People in Japan sometimes think AIDS is an American disease," said Yoko Akiyama, an undergraduate in international studies who participated in a workshop on AIDS offered by the University two weeks ago.

Japan's official policy on AIDS is to pretend it doesn't exist there, as official figures claim that only 330 Japanese have died from it out of a population of 124 million. Widespread ignorance about AIDS, years of denial and government apathy have resulted in a sudden rise of AIDS cases.

Akiyama said she never talked about the subject in her country. Talking about sex values remains taboo and brings guilty feelings. In Japan, she received her main education about AIDS from a special edition of *Newsweek*.

In 1993, the Japanese government decided to educate people by sponsoring an AIDS Prevention Foundation. Still, freshman Aki Hamada noticed that people have to strive to get some information, whereas she believes that in the United States the information comes to you.

Grace Karuga, a junior in pre-journalism from Kenya, noticed the same kind of "taboo" reactions in her country. Kenyans, Karuga said, believe that AIDS originated outside of the country. One century ago, they charged foreigners with bringing in syphilis and other venereal diseases.

People in Kenya receive no formal education about AIDS except through a weekly program broadcast by a public radio station, and Karuga learned about

this source through posters.

Karuga registered for a University workshop on AIDS partly because she had never met people with AIDS before. "I wanted to see the reality part of it. It was touching to hear these stories," she said.

Many international students will leave the country more informed about the subject than when they first came.

Alice Lachman, who teaches linguistics to newcomer international students, noticed a certain naivete toward the disease. Lachman, who is also a volunteer in an AIDS organization, considers that her students usually underestimate the seriousness of the situation.

When she showed them a videotape of Magic Johnson talking about his new mission, educating the heterosexual population, she said her class realized that everybody is vulnerable. The guest speakers she invited were also asked a lot of questions.

It is essential that students get informed about the disease and take advantage of all the opportunities and resources available on campus. Among them, the Student Health Center provides anonymous testing, information and counseling.

It is also particularly important to realize that the prevalent mode of HIV transmission tends now to be through heterosexual contact.

Ausland insisted on the specific vulnerability of young Asian women. In Asia, people still praise virginity and they just don't talk about sex and privacy issues. In the U.S., sexual activity out of wedlock and homosexuality are more acceptable. When they arrive here, some international students are bewildered.

For example, Ausland noticed that the commonplace and easy use of 'I love you' in the U.S. may confuse them. In some countries, these words are really meaningful and imply a great commitment. In Ausland's opinion, it is obvious that some men clearly take advantage of this vulnerability because of ignorance (concerning safe sex) and cultural differences.

The Orientation Week directed to newcomer international students already includes a workshop on sexual harassment. "It should also provide information about AIDS and link both issues," Akiyama said.

However, one of the greatest concerns deals with prevention. Communication campaigns and slogans sometimes don't speak to foreigners, while a series of misunderstandings can prevent fruitful communication with practitioners and counselors.

Some international students, probably more than Americans in general, are reluctant to discuss their personal life with a stranger. "Plus, we have different body languages. Some people look in the eyes, some don't. It's difficult not to step over their boundaries," Ausland said.

She emphasized the importance of recognizing the differences in cultural values as well as language barriers. "Some students may not understand anatomical terms, which makes things harder for us," she said.

Moreover, Ausland noticed a general distrust of the system. Although the HIV status is never reported, some people fear it may affect their legal situation in the United States. (visa status).

### ET ALS

**MEETINGS**  
ASUO Student Senate will meet today from 5 to 7 p.m. in EMU Cedar Room E. For more information, call 346-0630.  
Order of the Omega will meet tonight at 6 in Room 248 PLC. For more information, call 342-8590.  
Society of Professional Journalists will meet tonight at 7 in EMU Cedar Room A. For more information, call 683-1498.  
Dean of Students Office will sponsor a lesbian/bisexual women's drop-in today from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at the Koinonia Center, 1414 Kincaid St. For more information, call

346-1142.  
Physical Therapy/Occupational Therapy Club will have club elections tonight at 6:30 in the basement of Pegasus Pizza. Anyone interested in physical or occupational therapy is invited to attend.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

First United Methodist Church will sponsor a small group discussion titled "Economics of Livable Communities" in honor of Historic Preservation Month tonight from 7 to 9 at 1376 Olive St. For more information, call 345-0931.

## Candidates lining up for provost

By Heatherle Himes

Oregon Daily Emerald

Just because he can identify the problems facing the University does not mean that he alone has the solutions, said provost candidate Wallace Loh Monday afternoon.

Solutions must be reached through careful consideration by both faculty and administrators, he told the more than 50 faculty members in the audience of his speech.

Encouraging a consensus about how to prepare the University for the future would be a major part of Loh's duties if he is selected to be the University's next provost. As the chief academic administrator, the provost also allocates funds to academic units and approves faculty appointments, promotions and tenure decisions.

Loh, the current dean at the University of Washington School of Law, told the audience that he had ruminated on the crises that the University must be prepared to deal with in order to prepare for the future.

Among those issues, is coping with the dismal financial future, while still creating a community of learning and support for both faculty and students.

He said that the University must focus on general undergraduate education and interdisciplinary learning, which will foster a sense of a common academic goal. By sharing a common academic goal the University community will be strong enough to adapt to the changes necessary as number of minorities on campus increases.

These ideas are also supported by the Oregon Model, a set of goals and plans for the University created by Myles Brand.

Loh is one of four finalists for the provost job, and the second of the group to make presentations to faculty. He has served on several UW committees that have made strategic plans for the university's future.

Before he became dean of the UW law school in 1990, he was a teaching faculty member at the school for more than 15 years. He

taught courses in criminal justice reform, contracts, psychology and law and criminal procedure.

His interviews and application for University provost is being considered by a 19-member provost search panel of staff, faculty, students and Eugene residents.

The panel chose the final four from 117 applicants. They plan to make a recommendation to University president Myles Brand sometime this month. He will then make a recommendation to the State Board of Higher Education, which has the authority to hire a new provost.

Everly Fleicher, former executive vice chancellor at the University of California at Riverside, interviewed at the University last week. On Thursday, Charles Middleton, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Colorado at Boulder, will be visiting campus. On Friday John Moseley, UO vice president for research since 1985, will interview and make a brief presentation.

## Sex MATTERS

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- homophobia
- breaking up
- self-esteem
- how to make condoms feel oh-so-much better

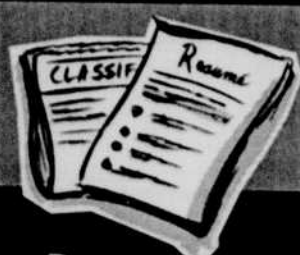


Presented by Jay Friedman, professional sexuality educator  
Contact the Health Education Office at 346-4456 for more information



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