

University offers wide range of foreign exchange programs

■ **STUDY:** The coordinators of the program believe it can help students learn more about themselves, and is affordable

By Kristin Bailey
Freelance Reporter

In Japan, every student graduating from high school is required to study English for at least two years. By the year 2000, the academic program for the European Community (EC) will demand that students demonstrate fluency in at least two foreign languages in order to matriculate.

According to Theodore M. Vestal, associate professor of political science at Oklahoma State University, the EC plans to send 10 percent of its students abroad to study.

As the nations of Asia and Europe continue to globalize their education, what is happening here at home? Are American universities giving their students what they need to be competent and competitive in the global work force?

Based on information provided by the University, foreign students compose 9.5 percent of the University's student population. In contrast, only 2 percent, or approximately 350 American University students, venture overseas each year.

This is above average when compared to the rest of the country's statistics. On average, only 1 percent of American undergraduates partake in study abroad programs, according to Vestal's research.

However, the University hopes to improve those numbers.

The Office of International Education and Exchange, located in room 330 Oregon Hall, offers 42 study programs in 24 countries. The OIEE hosts 1,620 international students from 87 countries.

Beverlee Patton is one of four program coordinators at the OIEE and believes that our deficiency in international awareness cannot be attributed to lack of opportunity or high costs.

Studies indicate that one of the greatest misconceptions of studying abroad is that it is costly and frivolous.

"I suspect that people believe that study abroad is expensive, but that is not true," Patton said. "The cost of a majority of programs is probably comparable to being a non-resident on campus, plus airfare. Sometimes it is cheaper to study abroad than to stay here."

The Oregon State System of Higher Education (OSSHE) offers reciprocal exchanges with institutions in the United Kingdom, Scotland and Australia. The tuition is free and the student pays only for accommodations and miscellaneous expenses.

Even if the cost proves too high, scholarships and loans are available.

"People must be prepared to do some investigating to find scholarships," Patton said. "We have an excellent resource library in the Office of International Education and Exchange with information about loans, scholarships and non-University programs such as work abroad and overseas internships."

If the cost is still an issue, students generally cannot be prohibited from using

their state and financial aid abroad.

A recent ruling from the US Department of Education, which is cited in The Chronicle of Higher Education, requires colleges give academic credit for courses in approved overseas study programs.

"Overseas study participants will receive University credit for courses satisfactorily completed," Patton said.

Programs are not necessarily limited to specific majors.

"Probably the most common areas of study are humanities, social sciences, arts and, of course, foreign language," Patton said. "However, there are many programs that have no language or major prerequisites."

Knowledge of foreign languages, cultures and politics is a foundation crucial to learning more about ourselves.

"Students who study internationally want to understand the world and themselves better," Patton said. "It offers them cultural enrichment and breadth of educational experience."

ET ALS

MEETINGS

EMU Board of Directors will meet today at 7:30 a.m. in the EMU Board Room. For more information, call 346-3720.

EMU Board of Directors House Committee will meet today at 2 p.m. in the EMU Board Room. For more information, call 346-0007.

College Democrats will meet tonight at 6 in EMU Century Room C.

Students for the Ethical Treatment of Animals will meet tonight at 6:30 in EMU Cedar Room A. For more information, call 346-6150.

RELIGION

Newman Center will offer student mass and social

tonight at 9 at the Newman Center. For more information, call 342-7021.

MISCELLANEOUS

Career Center will accept biddings today until 4 p.m. for interviews with the following organizations: Peace Corps, Tektronix, Northwest Mutual, Ford Black & Co PC, Sun Valley Co. and Black & Decker. You must attend a Campus Interview Program Orientation in order to participate. For more information, call 346-3235.

Peace Corps will offer an information session today at noon in EMU Cedar Rooms A & B. They will also meet today at 7 p.m. in the EMU Maple Room. For more information, call 346-3235.



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