

# UO senior, aspiring author takes his own life

■ The Springfield native, who had already written his first novel, transferred to the University from UNLV

By Jeremy Lang  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Don Stone said the first warning sign came two years ago when Joshua O'Brien boarded a plane for school and suddenly, without any word, didn't report to football camp at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas.

O'Brien, a University senior history major, died last weekend from a self-inflicted gun shot, according to Eugene Police Department spokeswoman Jan Power. She said that, according to the police report, O'Brien made a 911 call at 2:34 p.m. on May 12 and left the phone off the hook without saying anything to the operator.

When police arrived at his residence, they found the door open, O'Brien dead and a suicide note.

"He was really sensitive — he cared about a lot of people. Sometimes I thought he cared more about others than himself," said Stone, who coached O'Brien through four years of football at Thurston high school in Springfield and kept in close contact with him through his college years, most recently over last spring break.

"He was an outstanding student and a really emotional kid," Stone added. "He was one of our more fiery performers."

O'Brien played football and wrestled for Thurston before attending UNLV on a football scholarship his freshman year of college. Stone said that O'Brien went to UNLV for his sophomore year and after he didn't report to practice for a few days, coaches called

O'Brien's parents.

"The parents called me to see if I had heard from him," Stone said.

O'Brien's brother, Justin, a senior at Oregon State University, said that the decision to leave football and UNLV was sudden.

"One day he just decided no more football [and] decided to enroll in the UO," he said.

O'Brien's father chose not to comment on his son's cause of death.

Stone said O'Brien felt like he let people down by not continuing with football and he thought he was being treated for depression. As a person who also played football in college, he reminded O'Brien to do whatever made him happy.

Stone said he remembered when, in a 1994 first-round play-off game, Thurston missed a field goal and some players criticized the kicker. O'Brien instantly

stepped in to defend the kicker.

"He was not your typical football player ... that was his struggle ... sometimes [football] can be very brutal," Stone said.

O'Brien had many academic goals beyond his sports life, according to his brother. He said O'Brien was an aspiring writer who had written his first novel and taken it to a publisher, who returned it for revisions. He added that O'Brien was one of the kind of people whom everybody knew and wanted to be around.

"You could spend 15 to 30 minutes with him and just go 'whoa,'" he said. "Everybody had something in common with him, no matter if they were 6 or 60."

A memorial service for O'Brien will be held today at 2 p.m. at St. Alice Catholic Church in Springfield, where much of his family lives.

## Suicide facts

More than 32,000 people in the United States kill themselves every year.

Accounting for 1.4 percent of all deaths, suicide is the ninth leading cause of death in the country.

A person commits suicide about every 15 minutes in the United States, but it is estimated that an attempt is made about once a minute.

Sixty percent of all people who commit suicide kill themselves with firearms.

There are four male suicides for every female one; however, at least twice as many females as males attempt suicide.

3/4 of all suicides are committed by white males.

Source: American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

# One-credit mentor class networks students, employers

■ Career Center courses allow students to meet professionals in their field

By Adam Jude  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Junior Maria-Ladona Schaad enrolled in the Career Center's Mentor Program class last winter expecting only to improve the structure of her resumé.

Schaad was surprised, however, when she met with her mentor from Estée Lauder in New York City and established a relationship that eventually led to the

company offering her an internship.

"I really didn't expect it," Schaad said. "I went in looking for advice. But we talked and one thing led to another and they asked if I wanted to intern with them."

With a database of nearly 1,800 professional mentors from around the world, the Mentor Program directors are eagerly looking to provide students with a transition into the job market.

Alyson Bodai, program director, said there are nine courses offered fall term for those students

interested in meeting with professionals and exploring potential careers.

"This is a great opportunity for students to get hands-on experience from someone already succeeding in the field," Bodai said. "It's real life information."

In the one credit classes, students make a request to meet two mentors in career fields of their choice. The database — which includes representatives from the National Basketball Association, Paramount Pictures, The Late Show with David Letterman and the National Wildlife Foundation

— is then searched for a match and students are connected with the mentors to conduct short interviews.

"When you take the class, you learn about 40 different people and their careers," said Katie Hopper, assistant director of the Mentor Program. "And that's just that much more knowledge about career options."

The Mentor Program, established in 1993, has classes that meet just six times each term to address career planning, resumé writing, networking and interviews. English, biology, psychol-

ogy and journalism are some of the program's course offerings. An additional class is offered for all majors.

With her great experience in the mentor class, Schaad said she strongly recommends it.

"I was really impressed [with the Mentor Program]," Schaad said. "It shows why networking is so important."

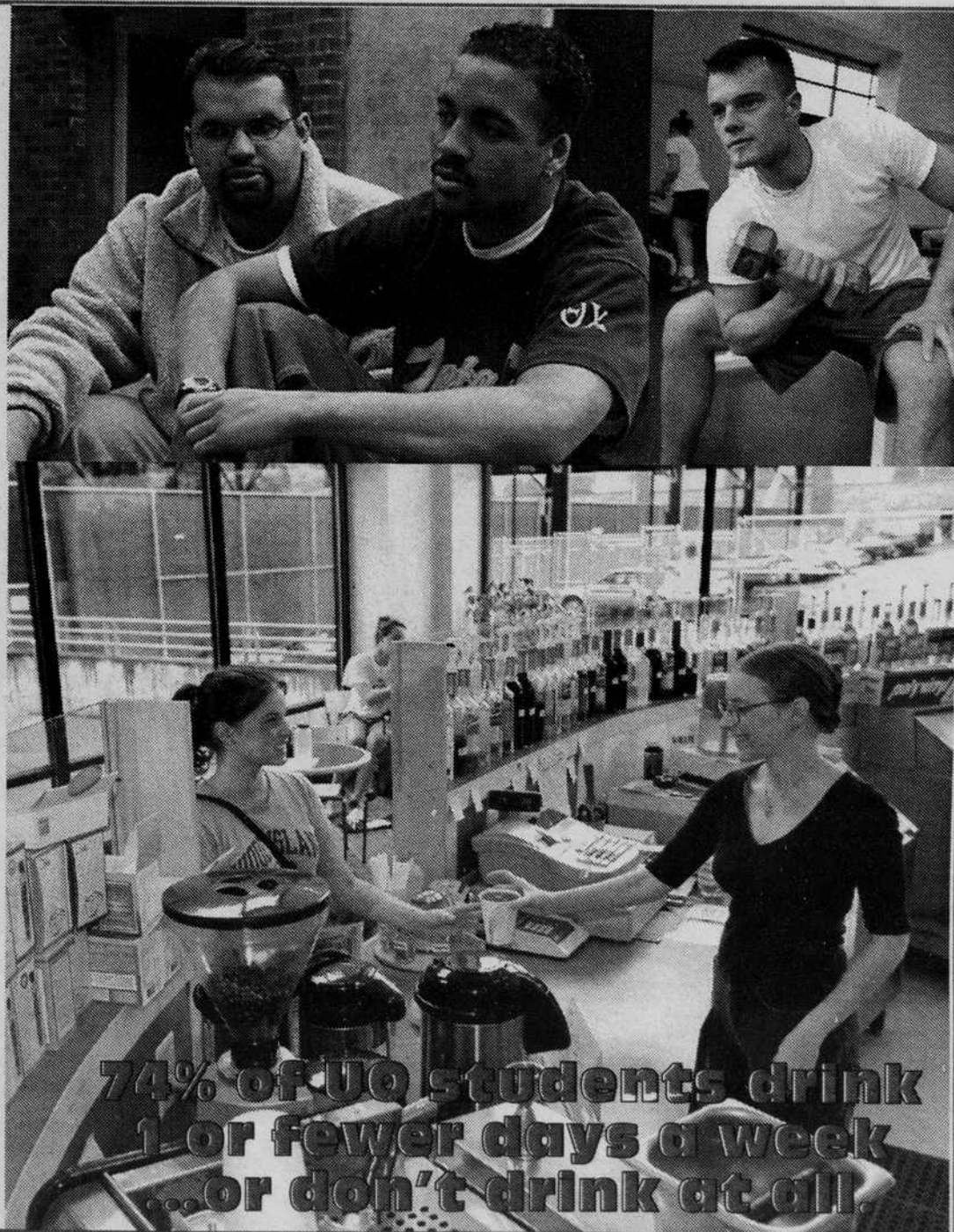
More information about the Mentor Program and its class offerings for fall term is available on the Career Center's Web site at <http://uocareer.uoregon.edu/mentor>.

**MOST**  
**UO students**  
**[80%] have**  
**4**  
**drinks or fewer**  
**when they party**

NEW VIEW

Office of Student Life  
University of Oregon

Data taken from 1998 UO Health Center Survey.



**74% of UO students drink**  
**1 or fewer days a week**  
**...or don't drink at all.**