

Overseas work can pay off

■ Many graduating students find happiness, self-worth, well-being and cash by getting employment abroad

By Serena Markstrom
Oregon Daily Emerald

Instead of filling out W4s and showing two forms of ID, many students are opting to collect stamps on their passports by working abroad after they graduate.

Whether through the Peace Corps, Global Graduates or the Japanese Exchange and Teaching program these students have found for them, the best first step after graduating is on foreign soil.

Heather Zissler, who will graduate with degrees in international studies and Spanish, is no stranger to traveling, having participated in two exchange programs. She will get a longer taste of something sweeter when she ventures to South America to work as a beekeeper for the Peace Corps.

Zissler's first choice was a community service project and she was surprised by her placement as a beekeeper, but she said she is eager to learn the task of beekeeping.

"I really wanted to be in Latin America," Zissler said.

Dave Kaplowe, a senior who will also travel to South America as a volunteer, said he chose the Peace Corps because he has not had a break from school since he began.

"I wanted to do something hands-on," said Kaplowe, a double major in biology and Spanish. "I need an adventure. I've been in static classrooms for too long."

Though Kaplowe does not yet know where he will be placed or what he will be doing, he may work with environmental education or teach English.

Another option students with degrees have is to teach English

abroad in the Japan Exchange and Teaching program, which began in 1987 to promote foreign language education in Japan.

Hillary Knox, a journalism and Spanish double major, will travel to Okinawa in July and spend one year teaching English through the JET program.

People who travel, Knox said, "have more opportunities to find out who they are and what they are good at. They also have more of a chance of being happy in the long run."

Though Knox has a public relations focus in the journalism school, she said she thinks the experience in Japan will help her career in the long run.

"Any experience in communicating with people and adapting will help with PR," Knox said. "I think I'll be better when I get back."

Another prospective JET participant, Gabby Lobue, also spent her sophomore year in Japan on an exchange program.

She too will teach in Okinawa, which is a rural area, and said "It's a good opportunity to expand my knowledge of the Japanese language. ... I like Japan. What better thing is there to do than facilitate someone else's education?"

The salaries participants earn with JET varies, but Lobue said she will make enough to pay off her student loans.

Students can also get a range of experiences, including English instruction, by participating in the Global Graduates internship program.

Kathy Poole, program coordinator, said students who have internship, study or work-abroad experience stand out to employers.

"It is a distinguishing experience for somebody when they go out to look for jobs," Poole said.

Wesley Jones will teach English to underprivileged children in

International options for grads

Global Graduates

http://www.orst.edu/dept/int_ed/global_grads/

Peace Corps

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/home.html>

Japan Exchange and Teaching Program

http://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/jet/index.html

Brazil through the program. He will also receive academic credit to finish degrees in international studies and history.

"I chose to do this particular program because my personal and academic interests lie in international non-profit and grassroots work," Jones said. "The position will also serve as field research for my thesis."

Other students chose the Global Graduates program to prepare for careers once they graduate.

Kendall Dodd will teach in Guadalajara, Mexico, in the fall. She plans to teach high school and the program combines her desire to travel with the necessity to gain experience in her chosen field.

"It's important to start traveling when you are younger," Dodd said. "It seems like a perfect program. ... College is what you make of it; [students] should take advantage of what it has to offer."

These traveling students said many others do not believe they can take risks to travel or are pressured to go into traditional jobs after graduation.

Though Kaplowe said he feels some apprehension about leaving his friends for two years, he is more excited for the opportunity to travel and be out of the classroom.

"I think I'm going to love it," Kaplowe said. "It's now or never."

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