

Hillel offers Jewish students free trip to Israel

■ The organization provides a chance for Jewish students to get in touch with their roots on a 10-day summer excursion

By Lisa Toth
Oregon Daily Emerald

Instead of sending his friends and family a stack of typical tourist-gear postcards, Benjamin

Garvey used water from the Sea of Galilee to paint watercolor postcards — and captured a piece of Israel for those who couldn't be there.

Garvey was one of 40 Jewish

students from the University who spent 10 days in Israel last summer. Hillel, a group for Jewish life on campus, is offering 40 students a free, 10-day trip to Israel again this June. The trip offers college students the chance to tour the country's most contemporary and historic sites.

The deadline for registration to participate in the trip is March 7.

As the largest Jewish organization in the world, with foundations and affiliates on 500 campuses around the globe, Hillel is offering this intense program to college students ages 18-26 who have never been to Israel before.

Philanthropists Charles Bronfman and Michael Steinhardt created the trip, and it has continued through a \$210 million partnership from a group of prominent philanthropists, local Jewish federations and the Israeli government.

Garvey recommended students take part in the trip to see highlights such as the sunrise on the Masada archaeological site. Other features of the trip include visits to Tel Aviv in Jerusalem, the Dead Sea and the Western Wall.

"It was an amazing opportunity. It's a free trip. There's no catch," Garvey said. "I definitely want to go back and do it again and spend more time in certain areas."

Garvey, a senior journalism major, said the trip was packed with events, including lectures and discussions about his identity and faith.

Boris Dolin, the programming



Courtesy of Ryan Dushman

Students from the University collect water from the Sea of Galilee to use in painting postcards with watercolors during a 10-day trip to Israel last summer.

adviser for Hillel, said the trip has been a success so far, and many students come back from Israel and become leaders in their Hillels.

"One of the big problems in the Jewish community is that college students do not have a good outlet for Judaism in college," Dolin said.

Dolin said he hopes because of last summer's program that this year's trip will offer students a place to explore their Judaism.

Matt Nelkin, a senior religious studies major, attended the trip last year and said it offers students a chance to get in touch with their roots.

"It is the homeland of the Jewish people and just being there

helps strengthen a sense of identity," Nelkin said.

Nelkin also said the trip encourages education about Judaism.

"Through the discussions it is not necessarily a discussion about how to be more religious, but just a matter of discussing what it means to be part of the Jewish people in the 21st century," Nelkin said.

Daniel Gruber, a junior physics major, said he came away from the trip with a sense of history about his people and bonded with other students from the University in the process.

Students can contact Hillel at 343-8920 for more information about the trip.

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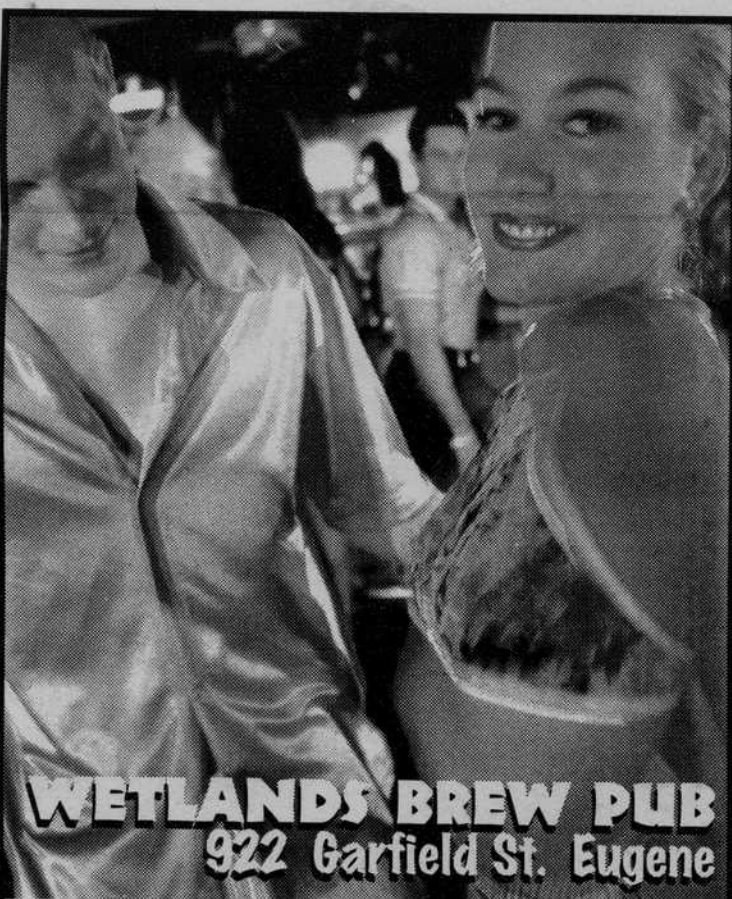
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OSU branch hinges on funding

BEND — Oregon State University may have won the rights to the state's first university branch, but it'll have to wait until summer to know if the Legislature will approve funding.

Passage of the state budget is the final order of business on the legislative agenda. If the state revenue forecast in May comes in significantly lower than expected, new programs such as the branch campus could face the chopping block.

With the Central Oregon branch scheduled to open this fall, OSU Provost Tim White has little time to plan which courses to offer, how to recruit 150 students and how to find eight faculty members willing to move to Bend, among many other details.

"It'll be tricky, for sure, but make no mistake — it's definitely doable," he said.

The State Board of Higher Education picked OSU for the branch Feb. 16, but a final decision on legislative funding likely won't be made until June or July — just three months before students are scheduled to show up for classes.

The time crunch puts OSU in the position of making shaky

commitments to students and faculty.

"It's hard to spend money when you don't have it," White said. "Basically, we have to plan on the presumption that funding is coming while acknowledging the fact that it might not happen."

Meantime, OSU officials and state higher education Chancellor Joe Cox are discussing ways to make commitments to students and faculty before the funding is approved.

To start out, OSU expects to recruit most students from Central Oregon Community College and from community college graduates now living in Central Oregon — the students least affected by the Legislature cuts funding for the branch.

Students will be allowed to apply as early as the next two weeks, but because funding isn't assured, they won't learn whether they have been accepted until late spring or early summer.

"We have to at least start recruiting now," said Linda Johnson, director of OSU's branch office in Bend. "That's why the curriculum planning is such a

huge part. We need that to meet our enrollment goals."

The OSU Foundation has established a \$3.5 million endowment that will provide \$150,000 to fund scholarships for as many as 60 students at the branch this fall. OSU officials will soon begin work on an online application site.

Johnson said if legislative funding falls through, students admitted to the branch may be allowed to attend the Corvallis campus this fall.

Meantime, COCC officials aren't waiting for the green light from Salem to put their plans into action.

Already, they are working to find space for about 35 new offices for branch faculty and staff, and classroom space.

"I am proceeding, with the exception of spending money, as if this is a done deal," said COCC Vice President for Instruction Bart Queary. "If we don't, we couldn't possibly do it. The things that cost money that we're doing now we needed to do anyway."

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