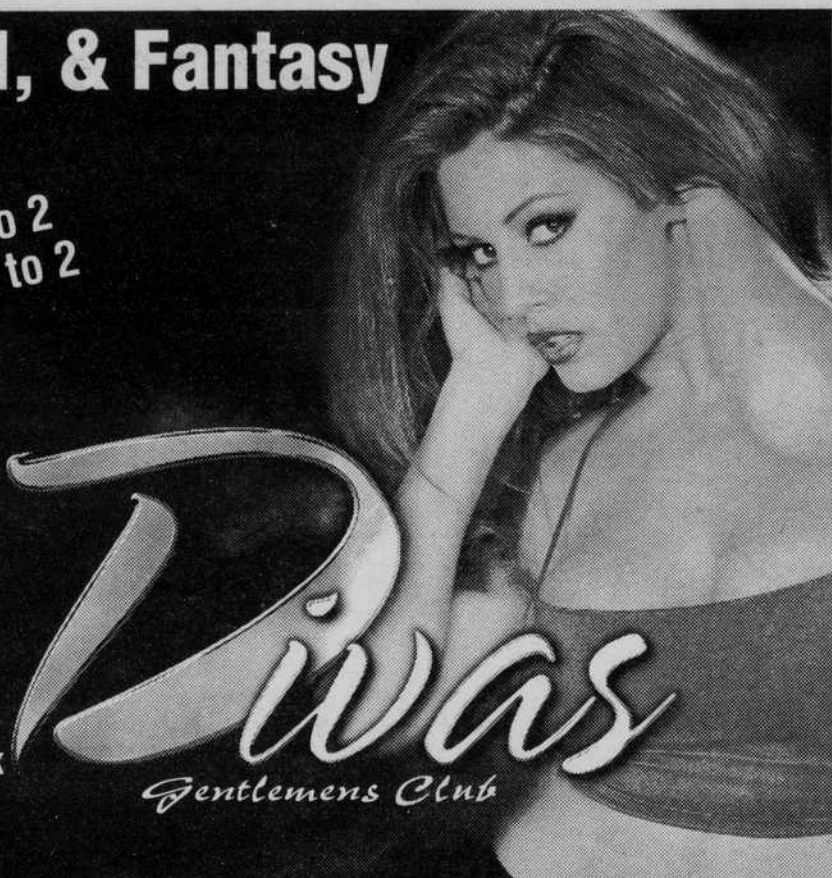


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# More students join Peace Corps

■ The corps is experiencing more interest in its program, in part because of Sept. 11

By Kathryn Franz  
 for the Emerald

While many graduating seniors will compete for scarce jobs in office cubicles this year, other graduates will head to foreign countries where they will spend two years teaching, building and promoting world peace.

This year, with the economy depressed and international tribulations shaking the world, University student interest in the Peace Corps is on the rise. Angela Susak, a senior, is turning in her application now in hopes of being sent abroad with the Peace Corps this winter.

"Sept. 11 actually greatly influenced my decision to join the Peace Corps," she said. "I feel it is now more important than ever to show Americans are doing good things."

Many graduating seniors are taking the same path as Susak. Normally about 50 to 60 University gradu-

ates apply for the Peace Corps each year. Last year, the University ranked fifth in the nation for the number of graduates working for the corps, said Skye Sieber, the University Peace Corps representative.

Sieber believes the University's high participation is a result of the school's inherent volunteer spirit, but she has noticed a surge in the amount of interest this year. Sieber usually holds one day of interviews each February, but this year she held two full days of interviews.

This increased interest coincides with a nationwide trend. After Sept. 11, the Peace Corps experienced a spike in inquiries. According to the Peace Corps Web site, the site's traffic and requests for applications increased more than 300 percent after President Bush's State of the Union speech, in which he announced his intention to double the number of Peace Corps volunteers during the next five years.

Rebekah Foster, a University junior and future Peace Corps applicant, isn't surprised by the swell of interest.

"I think it's only natural that there's more interest now because of the war time, and the president's call to the people makes a big difference too," Foster said. "I think it can have negative effects though, in that some people might be joining for the wrong reasons. Some people maybe think it's romantic."

Foster, who is studying international studies, said the recent world events haven't influenced her decision. She has known for a few years she wanted to join the Peace Corps. She said she has always been aware of foreign policy and the need for aid everywhere.

Currently there are 7,000 Peace Corps volunteers serving in 70 countries around the world. Since its founding in 1961, more than 165,000 men and women have served in the corps, according to the Peace Corps Web site.

The Peace Corps began as a challenge from President John F. Kennedy to a group of students at the University of Michigan. He asked them if they would be willing to serve their country and the cause of peace by living and working in the developing world. When Congress formally authorized the Peace Corps as a government agency, the objective was "to promote world peace and friendship," according to Peace Corps informational materials. In 40 years, that hasn't changed. Now, in the midst of the undeclared "war" on terrorism, many students feel that objective is more important than ever.

University senior Jeff Hawthorne said he thinks joining the corps is the closest thing to a calling he has ever experienced. He interviewed in February and is preparing to leave in July for training.

"The timing is right for me to contribute two years to the world community rather than the national community," Hawthorne said.

He isn't expecting to change the Turn to Peace Corps, page 5

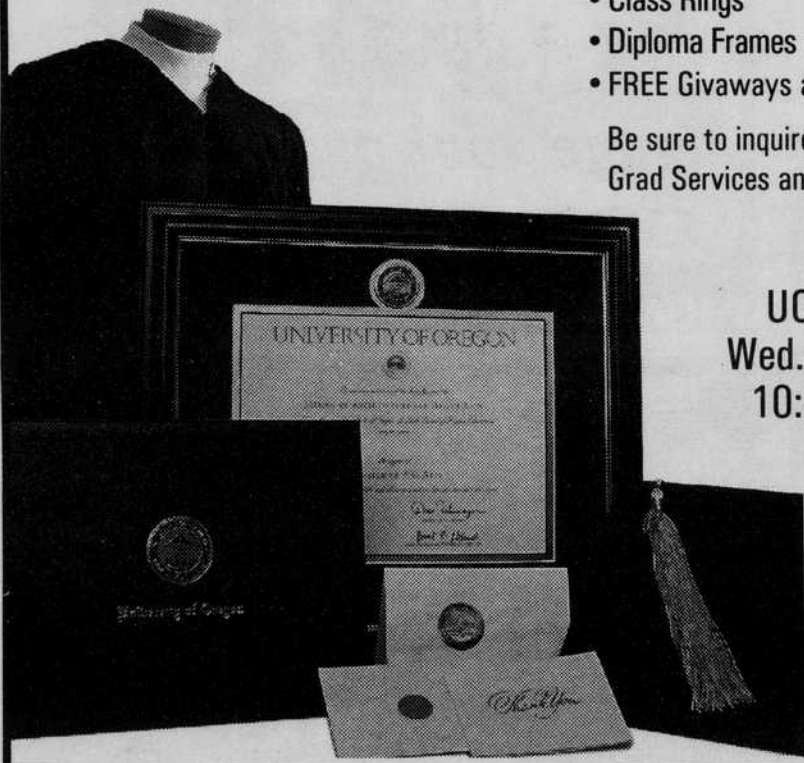
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