

University decides to keep Mideast study options open

Despite the shaky situation, officials aren't ruling out the possibility of offering programs in Turkey, Jordan or Israel

By Danielle Gillespie
Oregon Daily Emerald

While universities nationwide have been cutting their study abroad programs to the Middle East because of continuing violence in Israel and the threat of terrorist attacks, the University has hopes of keeping its program alive.

Rutgers University closed its study abroad program to the Middle East in December, and the University of California followed suit, closing its program in April and requesting that the 27 students studying in Israel return home immediately. Although several students refused, claiming they felt safe in Israel, others returned to the United States.

Presently, the University has not discussed canceling its study abroad program in the Middle East because at this time, it does not have any students studying abroad in these countries, and students have not expressed a keen interest in the Middle East at this time.

"If we had students there, or if students were really interested in studying abroad in Israel at this present time, we would have to make a decision about the program," Overseas Program Coordinator Cari Vanderkar said. "Our hope is in the near future we can strongly encourage students to go."

The Office of International Programs has three study abroad programs to Middle Eastern countries, offering University students the opportunity to study in Israel, Jordan and Turkey. OIP just adopted the study abroad program to Turkey and Jordan this fall, but no University students have gone to these countries yet.

"We are generally excited about the programs to Turkey and Jordan



Scott Abts Emerald

The University has study abroad programs for Turkey, Jordan and Israel.

because students can study Arabic and Turkish languages, which are languages not offered for study here at the University," Vanderkar said.

However, the two students who applied for the program to Israel for fall term 2002 have opted to defer their travel plans to a later date because of the current conditions in Israel.

"I encouraged these two students to be informed about what's going

on in that country and asked them to try and picture themselves there," Vanderkar said. "I wanted them to think of their security and well-being, and I asked them to talk with friends and family before committing to study there."

Vanderkar said the U.S. Department of State's "Travel Warning" is one reason she has been encouraging students to rethink travel to the Turn to **Study abroad**, page 8A

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