

Students who take time off have options for housing contracts

■ Many property managers lease on a nine-month basis, but with some planning, students can leave penalty-free

By Diane Huber
for the Emerald

Students planning to study abroad, intern or move away from Eugene for a term next year may have difficulty finding a place to live during the terms they are here.

Most property managers lease their apartments and houses near campus — meaning students sign a nine-month contract. If the renter breaks the contract, he or she usually must continue paying rent until June or until the unit is filled.

"Some owners are concerned that if a tenant moves out in April, they will not be able to re-rent until September," Chinook Properties owner Greg Young said.

For that reason, most property managers are hesitant to rent places month-to-month to students, he said.

If students want to begin their homework now, here are a few options for finding a place to live.

Regress to residence halls

Students may have already graduated from residence hall life, but it's never too late to go back. Residence halls are surprisingly flexible in terms of how long students need to stay, as long as students have an "educational reason" for breaking their three-term contract, Associate Director of Residence Life Sheri Donahoe said.

"The residence hall contract is for the nine-month University calendar. But if they have an educational reason, we release students of their contract," she said.

Students must provide University Housing with verification of

the program they are involved in, and they are free of their contract.

But the process is already under way for next year's living assignments, so Donahoe advises students to apply soon.

For more information, see <http://housing.uoregon.edu/>.

Consider Family Housing

University Family Housing offers several options for low-cost apartments with a month-to-month contract, including Westmoreland and Spencer View apartments. The only requirement is that tenants must be enrolled students over 21, though applicants with children are considered first, Donahoe said.

She said getting a space in the one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments can be competitive.

"It depends on who's coming to school that term," she said. "Every term is different."

It's best to apply now for next year, she said, and applicants will then be put on a waiting list until space opens up.

For more information, see <http://housing.uoregon.edu/>.

Prepare to dial

Nick Reich, office assistant at the University's Rental Information Office, recommends calling around to different property managers to see if they have any month-to-month contracts. He said most landlords and property managers require students to sign a nine-month lease, but there are a few exceptions.

"It's just a matter of finding them," Reich said.

And the farther away from campus, the more housing options.

"If you're willing to commute, you have a much better chance," he said.

Reich also suggests checking the paper for listings. Students do break their leases, especially later in the

year, and landlords are eager to fill those spots. There are also always listings of people looking for a roommate to fill a space in their house.

Be creative

Some students plan ahead so they have someone to take their room if they know they'll be moving. Others play it by ear. Bryan Ellis returned from studying abroad after fall term and drove around town until he found a house with a month-to-month sign in the window.

Mike Rozak returned from studying in Russia in December. He found his link to his new living arrangement at New Max's Tavern.

"I was quaffing Pabst and chatting with those around me, and an unlikely conversation with a woman led to her providing me with the phone number of her ex-boyfriend, who was looking for a roommate," he said.

Diane Huber is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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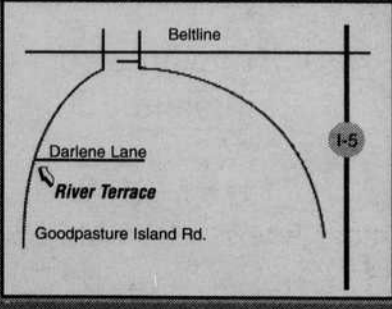
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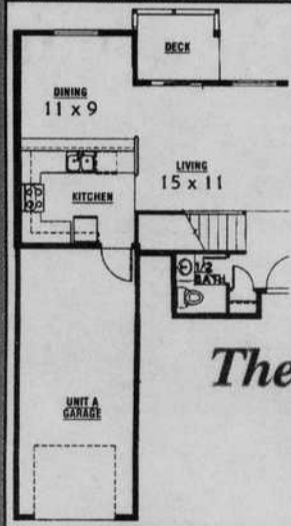
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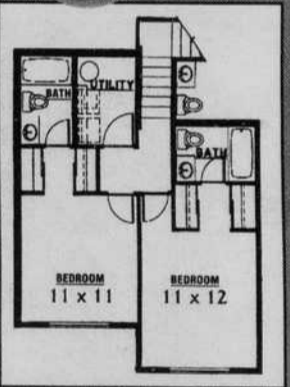
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