

Jordan: Students oriented prior to travel

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from studying in the Middle East.

According to data compiled by the Institute of International Education and the National Security Education Program, applications to IIE study abroad programs in the Near East and South Asia increased by 32 percent in the two years immediately following Sept. 11, 2001.

That information confirms the anecdotal findings of Caroline Vanderkar, associate director of Overseas Study Programs at the University, who has noticed an uptick in University students interested in traveling to the Middle East.

The University is mindful that problems can arise for students overseas and has taken measures to ensure the safety of students who travel abroad.

In order to decrease the risk of negative incidents occurring while traveling in foreign countries, students who enter a University-affiliated study abroad program are provided opportunities to prepare themselves before traveling to their destination countries.

Students participate in a general orientation program, which applies to all countries. They then attend a second, regional-specific orientation program.

Additionally, students are given information from the U.S. Department of State about the country they plan to visit.

The University is also careful to make sure students traveling abroad will not cause behavioral incidents in a foreign country.

Before a student is accepted to a study abroad program, he or she must sign a clearance form, authorizing the Office of International Programs to check his or her record with the Office of Student Judicial Affairs

for any serious violations.

"We want to have good representatives of the U of O, of our country, and we want to send students abroad for academic reasons, students who want to learn," Vanderkar said.

The University frequently evaluates study abroad programs to make sure they are safe for students. Programs to Israel and Indonesia have been suspended because of safety concerns, Vanderkar said.

"The most common reaction I received when I told people that I would be studying in an Arab country was something along the lines of 'Why would you want to study over there? Aren't you afraid?'"

THOMAS HOJEM | Student

"Our office and our partners take the safety and security of our students as number one. It's a primary concern," Vanderkar said. "Should anything happen, we monitor the situation so we are providing the best information that we can to our students, and then if need be, temporarily suspend the program."

When Hojem decided to travel to Amman, he encountered skepticism and concern from friends and family members.

"The most common reaction I received when I told people that I would be studying in an Arab country was something along the lines of 'Why would you want to study over there? Aren't you afraid?'" Hojem said in an e-mail.

Hojem said perceptions of the

Middle East as a place riddled with violence are inaccurate, even after the bombings.

"People mistake the Mideast as full of backwards and bloodthirsty Arabs, when the reality is quite different," Hojem wrote in the e-mail. "The fact is, and I think most of my fellow American students would feel the same, that my idea of the Middle East as formed by American media was way off. People there are normal, friendly people with a different culture and religion."

Before traveling to Jordan, Hojem worried that people there would dislike him because he is American. While he said he has encountered some resentment on the part of Jordanians, he has not experienced any major incidents of anti-Americanism.

"Most Jordanians are thankfully able to separate American citizens from the actions of their government," he wrote.

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UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTER

WORLD AIDS DAY

WEEK OF EVENTS

ALL WEEK

HIV TESTING at UO Health Center. Oral swab (\$15), blood draw (\$12). Allow two weeks for results. 346-2770 for appointment.

UO PEER HEALTH EDUCATORS will be have a table outside the Health Resource Center in the EMU 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. M-F with a WAD educational board, materials, condoms and ribbons.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28

MOVIE "Global Health: America's Response to Aids" The U.S. has announced the most far-reaching program ever devised for prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS around the world, but some critics say it's simply a reshuffling of existing commitments. What's the real truth behind President Bush's global project on AIDS? 6 p.m. EMU Ben Linder Room.

MOVIE Philadelphia. 7 p.m. EMU Ben Linder Room.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29

LGBTQA presents a Sex Positive Workshop in the Multicultural Center (EMU room 33) — 6 p.m.

THE DOWNTOWN LIBRARY 100 W. 10th Ave. will feature a slide show and talk by Lindsey Reynolds about her experience in Southern Africa. Public Health Educator and photographer Lindsey Reynolds brings home both the facts and the faces of southern Africa's HIV/AIDS pandemic. 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30

"AIDS HERE AND ABROAD" Round table discussion with HIV positive college students and a person who spent time in the orphanages in Ethiopia. 6 p.m. in the EMU Gumwood Room

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1

THE YOUTH PROGRAM will have a table at the UO Bookstore from 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. with information about the services provided by HIV Alliance.

UO PEER HEALTH EDUCATORS tabling in the Rec Center. HIV prevention, HIV testing, World AIDS Day history and Health Center services 4 - 6 p.m.

"STOP AIDS. KEEP THE PROMISE" A candlelight memorial observance, sponsored by the HIV Alliance will happen at the Downtown Eugene Park Blocks SW corner of 8th & Oak Street 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

DRAG AND BURLESQUE SHOW featuring SheBang!, Imperial Sovereign Court Empresses, Burlesque performers and an amateur drag contest to crown campus Queen & King! Health Center and Peer Health staffing with HIV educational materials. 8 p.m. in the EMU Ballroom.

