



Brian Barber/Daily Nebraskan

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# Corps member questioned

People ask who, what, where, why, when and how much

Why am I going into the Peace Corps?

In a ranking of questions people/friends most frequently ask me when they find out I'm going into the Peace Corps, this question ranks about fifth. Before I get into this meaty question, let me first answer the four most frequently asked questions.



Stew Magnuson

First, where is Mauritania? Mauritania, the country to which I've been assigned, is located on the west coast of Africa in the Sahara Desert. It has a population of just over one million, which is 95 percent Islamic. Of high school aged children, only 2 percent attend school. The two main languages are Arabic and French with an only 17 percent literacy rate.

When you think of Berbers going from oasis to oasis on their camel caravans, that's one aspect of Mauritania.

Second, how much does it pay? I find it highly amusing that this is such a common question. The Peace Corps pays enough to live on while in the country, enough to save for vacations and a readjustment fund for when I get out. The next time one of these materialists asks, I'm going to say "Oh about \$35,000 per year for starters," just so I can hear them say,

"Oh really? Maybe I oughta join up." Third, what are you going to do there?

I'm going to teach English as a foreign language.

Fourth, when do you leave and for how long?

I'll leave in mid-June for two years. And finally, just why are you going into the Peace Corps?

Well, there are all sorts of practical reasons why I'm going, the kind of reasons the people who ask me how

## Where is Mauritania?

much I'm going to pull in being a Peace Corps volunteer may ask. So here they are:

I'm going to learn Arabic, a marketable skill. It's going to be some weird dialect, but at least I'll be able to decipher those odd letters. I'll learn to speak French, something I neglected to do after living in France for a year. And best of all, I'll learn to teach English as a foreign language, a skill that is highly in demand in virtually every country in the world except Australia and Great Britain. After the Peace Corps, I'll be able to write my ticket to any non-English speaking country in the world that interests me. Every one of them would love to have a native English speaker teach the world's most demanded language.

I hope that satisfies all the materialists and career minded folks out there. But actually, these reasons for giving up the joys of Western civilization aren't exactly high on my list.

I've always been a foreign culture lover. Unlike many of the xenophobic types who live in Nebraska, I've always been fascinated by cultures and people different from myself. I guess that makes me a xenophile. I've always been the type to sit down in front of the TV during a National Geographic special and absorb every

word. The chance to live in another culture for two years is a great opportunity. To heck with how much I'm going to make. If I had the money, I would pay them to let me live there for two years.

But the foremost reason for me going into the Peace Corps is harder to put in words, and maybe I don't completely understand it myself. It's like the cliched response after someone asks a mountain climber why he climbs a mountain, "Because it's there."

It's the challenge I suppose. Something to overcome, something to challenge me. An adventure in a time when adventures are hard to find.

**It's the challenge I suppose. Something to overcome, something to challenge me. An adventure in a time when adventures are hard to find.**

That's it folks. No, there aren't any stark raving idealistic reasons for going like trying to save the world or starving children. Teaching English doesn't lend itself to these idealistic motivations anyway. Although, after I teach a kid to read English, he can pick up a book on agriculture written at UNL and understand better farming techniques.

That satisfies the pragmatist, the idealist and the adventurer in me.



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## Varied and valuable Liberal arts offers 40 majors

By Joeth Zucco Staff Reporter

With 40 majors offered in the College of Arts and Sciences, a liberal arts degree can provide a graduate with more than a career, it can provide a lifetime.

According to Arts and Sciences Dean Gerry Meisels, a liberal arts degree can be defined as "a degree in which the program of courses is not specified for a job-entry position."

Degrees range from psychology to English, to fine arts and economics. Meisels said that a liberal arts degree provides a broad, general preparation and the ability to work with people.

**Service economy**  
"We're moving from a market economy to a service economy," Meisels said. "The ability to work with

people is very important."

Ann Kopera, coordinator of advising for the College of Arts and Sciences, said "It's not a limiting degree." Graduates have a 40 to 50-year career ahead of them with a possibility of three to five career changes, she said.

Carol Geu is a prime example. A 1982 fine arts graduate, Geu has gone through three job changes. After graduation she worked for a small advertising agency, became production artist in the Lincoln Journal-Star's advertising department and currently is a self-employed graphic arts designer.

**Options available**  
With a liberal arts degree, a number of options are available. Kopera listed graduate school, professional school, ministry or immediate employment. Meisels said that

a large number of graduates go on to graduate school.

"We recommend that students go to another school for graduate studies to broaden their experiences," Meisels said.

Craig Riecke, a computer science graduate student, decided to stay at UNL. He pursued graduate school because he wants to go into research and teaching.

**Real perspective**  
"I think everyone should have a liberal arts education," Riecke said. "It really helps you get a real perspective on the world and what's going on."

Kopera said that there is not necessarily a one to one relationship between what you major in and what your profession will be.