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Spain study abroad to go on despite attacks

By Donn M. Fresard, Daily Staff Reporter

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Despite a series of train bombings in Madrid last week that killed at least 200 people and injured more than 1,400, the University's Office of International Programs is planning ahead with its scheduled study-abroad programs in Spain.

"At this point we do not have any plans to cancel programs," said OIP Director Carol Dickerman. "Nor do any of our colleagues in other schools."

The OIP currently administers two programs in Spain — one in Seville and one in Granada. The third group of University students is scheduled to arrive in Salamanca on June 27.

The U.S. Department of State has not issued a travel warning in response to the bombings, but the department did, however, release a public announcement on Friday urging U.S. citizens to "remain alert and avoid large crowds when possible."

The announcement is set to expire June 11. While students enrolling in the OIP's summer program will not arrive in Salamanca until two weeks after the warnings expire, the State Department's announcement does apply to the University students currently studying in Spain and Granada.

In response to the announcement, the OIP has taken measures to ensure the safety of students currently studying in the area, Dickerman said.

"We forwarded an announcement to the onsite directors," she said. "We've suggested that they stick around the program sites, and that they not do a lot of traveling by plane or train."

"I have heard nothing to indicate that anyone is considering coming home," Dickerman said.

But if the situation changes, she said, the OIP will not hesitate to make adjustments.

Dickerman said the OIP will monitor the situation through its staff in Spain in addition to watching for travel warnings from the State Department.

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"If there were a travel warning, if we thought conditions were unsafe in a particular area, we might cancel a program," Dickerman said. "It might be possible that we'd immediately come home (or) move them somewhere else. It really depends on what the specific threat is."

But students who are planning on studying in Spain through the OIP said the bombings would not affect their plans. "I'm not thinking about canceling the trip," LSA sophomore Matt Dickman said.

Dickman, who said he has visited Spain before, noted that the Basque militant group

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made terrorism a concern for tourists since the years of the fascist Francisco Franco r Currently, officials strongly suspect al-Qaida perpetrated the bombing, though ETA w. suspected. "Traveling to Spain, one always knows that terrorism is a problem," Dickr "I'm not that concerned about it, but it 's always there in the back of your mind."

LSA sophomore John Denman-Duggan, who said he will be taking a trip to Spain and European countries this summer before studying in Spain sometime next year, also s would not change his plans.

"I wasn't worried, because I figured, 'What are the chances something like that will h the few days I'm there?' " Denman-Duggan said.

Still, Dickerman stressed that the OIP would base any future decisions related to the on its own assessment of the area's safety.

"Whether students themselves are concerned or not, obviously we don't want to be s students to a place that's unsafe," Dickerman said.

Spain study abroad to go on despite attacks

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