Dear FIG member,

Welcome to the Animal Behavior FIG 2012!

We can't wait to meet you this fall, and jump-start your amazing experience on campus. Our FIG consists of three classes, Biology 132: Introduction to Animal Behavior, Anthropology 171: Introduction to Monkeys and Apes, and College Connections. Your two core FIG classes will focus on animals, especially primates, and why they do what they do. Introduction to Monkeys and Apes is a biological anthropology course, which examines our closest living relatives. Introduction to Animal Behavior is a biology course, which covers a wide range of animal adaptations and characteristics, and how animals have changed over evolutionary time. We will be working with you in College Connections to guide your critical thinking between the two FIG classes. We will help you apply your understanding of animal biology and behavior to the information you will have covered on monkeys and apes. The FIG will partake in a variety of wildlife activities, such as a special insider’s tour of the Portland Primate Center. These amazing opportunities to witness animal behavior up close will help the lectures come to life. We will also introduce you to campus resources, study skills, and other tools to help you transition into life at the University of Oregon.

We would like to briefly introduce ourselves. Dr. Frances White is an associate professor in the Anthropology department and its head of undergraduate studies. Her research is focused on primatology, especially the Bonobo species. She does field research on Bonobos in the Lomako Forest of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She will be your College Connections faculty member as well as teaching Monkeys and Apes. Professor Debbie Schelnoff is a biology faculty member. She has an incredibly extensive knowledge of animal behavior, and will be a great resource for you in the FIG.

My name is Melanie and I will be your FIG academic assistant. I am originally from Seattle, Washington, and this fall will be my senior year at the University of Oregon. I am a cinema studies major, and an anthropology minor. I love all forms of wildlife, but I have a particular passion for primates. I have a major travel bug, and recently went to Kenya to research black and white Colobus monkeys (you'll learn what those are!). This summer, Dr. White and I will be researching lemurs together on St. Catherine’s Island. I am a major cinephile, and love to write, produce, and edit films for my major. I hope to find a job filming wildlife documentaries after graduation.

I can't wait to meet you during Week of Welcome. Our class will officially meet for the first time on Friday, September 21, 2012, at 10 a.m. in Columbia 150. We will also be attending the University Convocation together as a group on Sunday, Sunday, Sept. 23, 2012 in the afternoon. It is very important for our FIG to attend these activities, so please keep this letter as a reminder, and put the dates on your calendar. Also, have your Student Handbook with you; it will be a valuable resource to you during Week of Welcome.

We would also like you to begin your study of primates and animal behavior over the
summer. There are many options available to you, but we ask that you watch episode 15 from the series TEDTalks: Beasts, Bugs, and Bio-wilderment. TEDTalks are live-streamed conferences that discuss important world issues. This particular episode is by Jane Goodall, “What Separates Us From Apes.” This episode is available online, and on Netflix Instant Watch. There are many other books and media available on primate and animal behavior, and we would be happy to point you towards something of interest.

We would appreciate if you could forward any questions you have to Melanie, as well as a brief introduction of yourself.

You can search for the Facebook group under “Animal Behavior FIG 2012”.

If you have any further questions about the FIG course or what to expect at the University of Oregon, please feel free to send us an email.

We are looking forward to teaching and working with you this fall!

Sincerely,

Melanie Bowman and Dr. White
mgb@uoregon