Hello Creativity Toolbox students!

My name is Shani Skeete and I will be helping to guide you through your first term of freshman year through being your FIG Assistant! I will be a second year student at the University of Oregon starting the Fall 2012 term. I am originally from Phoenix, AZ, and decided my life was lacking in dampness, so I came to Eugene, OR. My goals for now are to major in journalism with a focus in advertising and to get a job in a cool city like Portland or Seattle. I have many interests, including watching way too much TV, dancing, and going to the movies (which are super cheap here, by the way). There are so many great things about Eugene and the UO. It is a beautiful place, and it is very easy to get around and explore. From sports games to nature trails, to the performing arts and the Saturday Market, there are going to be so many new attractions for you to uncover.

I’m sure you are all excited (and let’s be real, a little bit nervous) to be in college. Luckily for you, the UO has this excellent program dedicated to starting you off right. Being in a FIG is an excellent way to make friends, build connections with faculty, and gain confidence in you as a college student. As a former Creativity Toolbox student, I can assure you that the benefits I have just described are not made up! Also, CT students are some of the coolest kids on the block. By choosing this FIG, you have chosen to be in a class with about 25 smart, creative, and interesting students who will hopefully become your close friends!

In my opinion, what makes the Creativity Toolbox FIG such a great experience is our professor, Deb Morrison. She is one of the most inspiring people I have ever met and she is an expert on creative thinking. Her focus as a professor is the advertising sequence in the School of Journalism and Communication. But don’t worry; our goal is not to turn you all into an army of advertising majors. She is here to help give you the tools to be idea makers and creative thinkers. During our College Connections class, we will meet weekly with Professor Morrison and discuss all things creative and awesome while simultaneously making magic happen.

This FIG is also composed of two four-credit courses: J201: Mass Media and Society with Harsha Gangadharbatla and AAD250: Art and Human Values with David Turner. As you may have guessed, J201 is a journalism course designed to give students an understanding of the connection between media and the world in which it operates. It also gives insight into the history of the main media forms from books to the internet and more. Professor Gangadharbatla also has a focus in advertising, as well as in communication studies. He is a great lecturer and very approachable. In AAD250, you will look at art through the lens of human experience. The main goal of this course is to examine how human values shape art and, more importantly, how art shapes human values. Professor Turner has been the director of several major museums across the country, including the UO’s own museum of art. In addition to being an art expert, he also teaches courses in the School of Architecture and Allied Arts (AAA) as well as the Arts and Administration Program.

Now that you know a bit more about your FIG courses and professors, you are probably wondering what we will actually be doing as a FIG. The first FIG activity planned is the Week of Welcome Meeting, which will be held Friday, September 21st. We will meet in lecture hall Columbia 150, at 10am. It is important to be on time for this meeting, as we will be breaking
into our FIGs and moving to a different location. During this first meeting you will learn more about the FIG and get to meet Deb Morrison and me. The next time we will meet is Sunday, September 23rd for University Convocation, which we will be going to as a group. It will be a great opportunity to start getting to know your fellow classmates, as well as to hear inspiring speeches from UO staff.

In the meantime, we have a simple and fun summer assignment for you to do. Your assignment is to read How to Be an Explorer of the World by Keri Smith. Specifically, you will need to read the section “How To Use This Book,” as well as to choose at least 10 “explorations” to do. I suggest using an unlined, 9” x10” notebook (or something similar). This assignment is meant to help you get creative and find ways to express yourself. Now, let me clear up one big misconception with this FIG. It is not an art class! It doesn’t matter if you can’t (or think you can’t) draw or take photographs; any way you can create and express your ideas is fine. If you have any confusion about this assignment, feel free to contact me with questions. Even if you don’t have questions, please send me your email addresses so we can start introducing ourselves!

Have a great summer! And smile, you’re in college now!

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