Dear FIG student,

Your instructor, Dr. Exton and your FIG assistant, Zack Vonderach would like to welcome you to The Forensic Science FIG! We are excited to be a part of your freshman experience here at The University of Oregon. Our goal is to help your transition into college go as smoothly as possible.

Dr. Exton will be the instructor of the College Connections class. Not only will she be teaching this but she will also be the instructor for your general chemistry and chemistry lab classes. Talk about the perfect opportunity to get to know your professor! Dr. Exton’s work has been focused on developing a general chemistry lab curriculum that is environmentally green and she recently won a national award for incorporating sustainability into the chemistry curriculum. Dr. Exton shares her office with her dog Zoey who could quite possibly be the cutest dog on earth. When she’s not working, Dr. Exton is happiest when she’s outdoors. Gardening, rowing in her shell, and hiking with Zoey are some of her favorite activities.

My name is Zack Vonderach and I am going to be your FIG assistant. This year will be my third year at the University of Oregon. I am from Beaverton, Oregon, which is right outside Portland. I have declared a general science major with a business and chemistry minor. My goal is to go to graduate school and study optometry. This is going to require four more years of school but I couldn’t be more excited. As a freshman, I took the general chemistry and lab sequence with Dr. Exton as my professor. And that’s not all! I was even in a chemistry FIG. In other words, I know exactly what you are about to experience, and I can be a big help as you start your college career. I do like other things besides going to school and taking science classes. In fact, my favorite thing to do is quite the opposite. I love going on vacation, and summer is my favorite time of the whole year. The sun gives me the opportunity to do all my favorite things. I enjoy wakeboarding, playing golf, and going to concerts. I have been lucky enough to travel to Belgium, France, and Holland to visit my grandparents. I also work at the Portland Golf Club during my summers at home. I am looking forward to hearing about your summer adventures this fall.

Our FIG combines general chemistry and chemistry lab. Lab gives you the opportunity to apply concepts that you learn in general chemistry. Some of these concepts will be identifying chemicals, analyzing properties of water, writing chemical equations as they occur in the lab, and many more. In our FIG, we will explore how forensic scientists use chemistry to solve crimes. This year we are working on setting up a field trip to the Eugene Crime Lab which would be way cool! In being a part of the Forensic Science FIG, you will get the opportunity to learn how to use campus resources as well as participate in social activities with your peers. As with every FIG, we are going to have a summer reading assignment. Dr. Exton and I want you to read *The Poisoner’s Handbook* by Deborah Blum over the summer, and we will expect you to have it read by the first day of class. Our hope is that this book will not only be very entertaining, but also provide some background on what forensic science is and how it involves chemistry. This book
can be found at most bookstores, local libraries, as well as online. Dr. Exton will be emailing you a scavenger hunt that goes along with the book, so be on the lookout for that in your email.

We will be meeting with Dr. Exton on **Friday, September 21, 2012 in Columbia 150 at 10:00 am.** We ask that you be on time to this first meeting because we won’t be staying there very long. It is also important that you bring your **Student Handbook** to school because you will be referring to it for as long as you attend school here. After our first meeting, we will have our first activity as a group. I am not going to give it away, but please bring a couple of dollars just in case you need it. One last important date to remember is that on **Sunday, September 23, 2012,** we will be attending the University Convocation as a group.

We are excited to meet you and to help you get your first year of college underway. You will have plenty of opportunities to get to know us, but we want to find out a little bit about you. Please respond with an email and introduce yourself and include a few of your interests. Lastly, if you have any questions at all, don’t hesitate to email. We can’t wait to hear from you!!

Sincerely,

Zack Vonderach

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Deborah Exton

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