Hello “Justice, Beauty, and Nature” FIG student!

My name is Alexandra and I will be your FIG Assistant for fall term. I will be a junior in the fall. I am from West Linn, OR, a suburb of Portland. It is just a mile from Oregon City, the end of the Oregon Trail. I am majoring in English and minoring in medieval studies, however, I have way too many interests to count. I love music and movies and outdoor pursuits. I thoroughly enjoy Settlers of Catan, bike rides, knitting, Harry Potter, and Tetris. Yet you may wonder why are my many interests narrowed down to environmental studies and philosophy for this FIG? That would be because of my fascination of the human behavior, emotion, ethics, morals, and aesthetics particularly in terms of our relation to the environment… the list goes on and on!

The FIG you chose is Justice, Beauty, and Nature; as I am sure you already know. I am convinced that will be the best FIG ever! Let me clue you in as to why. First off, we are all taking two amazing four-credit classes that will also help to complete the general education requirements at the University of Oregon. Awesome. These courses are ENVS 201: Intro to Environmental Studies, Social Sciences and PHIL 110: Human Nature. You are also enrolled in the college connections class where I will be helping out Professor Jason Schreiner. We are both super excited to teach this FIG! Jason wanted to say a few words:

Hello!

I (Jason) am pleased to have the opportunity to co-teach with Alexandra and work with you in the fall as you make the transition to your new life at the University of Oregon. Let me add just a few things to Alexandra’s letter.

First, you could not have a better mentor than Alexandra: she really knows her way around the University and how to help you make the most of your FIG experience. Be assured, you are in good hands and will have an outstanding experience with her!

As for me, I first moved to Eugene eight years ago to be graduate student in Environmental Studies. I fell in love with Eugene and chose to stay here – it is a wonderful place to be. I now work for the UO Teaching Effectiveness Program, helping professors and graduate students on our campus become better teachers. I also teach for the Environmental Studies Program. In my spare time, I enjoy the beauty of Oregon with my family, and I am active in the community as an advocate for sustainability, permaculture, and citizen empowerment.

Alexandra and I have both educational and fun activities planned for our FIG. We hope they will challenge and support you as you adjust to our campus and community. Please do not hesitate to contact me this summer with any questions you might have about our FIG. If you are in Eugene this summer, I’d be delighted to meet you and chat. My office is located in the Teaching and Learning Center in Prince Lucien Campbell (PLC) Hall, which is the tallest building on campus. Just let me know when you might be coming by so I can plan to be here to see you.
The core aim of this FIG is for us—together—to find the connection between the two four-credit classes. Beyond that, the college connections course is also a place where we can just get to know each other, sharing our joys and venting our problems throughout this fall term. Now, back to Alexandra:

My freshman year, I (Alexandra) was in a FIG which is quite similar to this FIG. It dealt with philosophy and nature and the reasons people do what they do. It was really helpful to have the college connections class to explore how the classes connect with each other. This college connections course will not only be helpful academically, but will also give you a chance to meet 24 other students who have similar interests as you. My two best friends were in my FIG!

Jason and I have some great activities planned for FIG that will be educational (and maybe some not so educational, but just fun) and really exciting. We have tried to make them helpful and engaging to you as you transition to your new home. Please let us know if you have any questions about our plans prior to our first meeting in September.

When you arrive to the UO, we will be meeting with Jason during the Week of Welcome on **Friday, September 21, 2012** in Columbia 150. The meeting starts at **10 AM**, but arriving five to ten minutes early is highly encouraged! We will all meet and get to know each other briefly. Make sure you are on time, because shortly after we meet in Columbia we will move to another location. The University Convocation is **Sunday, September 23, 2012**. We will meet prior to its start and arrive together, so have no worries about the details.

But now for academic matters: The summer assignment for you is fairly simple. Watch the documentary **Home**. It is available on Youtube: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqxENMKAeCU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqxENMKAeCU). It’s only 90 minutes, but quite informative. Also, please email me at [mink@uoregon.edu](mailto:mink@uoregon.edu) and Jason at [jschrein@uoregon.edu](mailto:jschrein@uoregon.edu) this summer. We’d love to get to know you. If you’re willing, look me up on Facebook! Mink is a fairly uncommon surname, to say the least, so I’m easy to find. If you have any questions, please, don’t hesitate to ask. Can’t wait to get your emails (and perhaps see you on Facebook). Also, as this is a residential FIG, I will see you at move-in in the fall. Have a great rest of your summer.

See you in September,

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