Dear FIG Student,

Welcome to your first term in college! Can you believe how quick it’ll be until you arrive on campus to begin your new life as a college student? How are you feeling? Nervous? Excited? Going to college comes with a lot of emotions and feelings, but don’t worry, you chose the right FIG to start off your first year. So congratulations on choosing the FIG Science Story. Science Story is a residential FIG, which means you’ll be living in a residence hall community with your FIG peers as well as other freshman that are not in the FIG. Basically, being a part of a residential FIG means there is more time for fun and exciting activities in and outside of the classroom.

Before I get more into the FIG, let me introduce myself. My name is Baylea O’Brien and I will be your FIG Assistant (FA) for fall term. I will also be living in the residence halls with you. I am a senior from Billings, Montana majoring in journalism and international studies. Aside from academia, I love to write, eat, drink coffee, drool at cupcakes and work out. I write for the Flux Magazine and I wrote for the Daily Emerald and Ethos Magazine as well.

Now, let me introduce you to your College Connections professor Mark Blaine. Mark is a professor for the School of Journalism and Communication here at the University of Oregon and he specializes in writing, interactive media, and multimedia storytelling. Mark enjoys the outdoors and loves to run. He has participated in eight half marathons throughout this life. Point blank: Mark Blaine knows his stuff.

Now that you have gotten to know a little bit about Mark and me, let me tell you more about the FIG. The FIG combines a smaller class containing 25 FIG students with two larger lecture classes, HPHY101: Exercise as Medicine and J201: Mass Media and Society. In our College Connections class, we will marry the ideas of story and science through the focus of ultra running. We will be taking trips down to the Biometrics Lab, have ultra-running guest speakers as well as field trips that include running and hiking in various locations in Eugene. Basically, this class will teach you about running, storytelling and handling your first term of college, both socially and academically.

Getting excited? Me too! But now I need to give you important times and dates during your first week at the University of Oregon. First, we will be meeting at 11 a.m. on Friday, September 21st in Columbia 150 (be sure to bring your student handbook). There will be tons of other students in FIGs flocking that way, so you can’t miss the crowd. Also on Sunday September 23rd we will be meeting as a group to go the University Convocation where you will get the privilege of hearing University of Oregon’s President and others speak. Also, plan on bringing a couple dollars just in case we decide to go somewhere after, hint, hint. Attendance is
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**mandatory** for these events. So write them down on a notebook, on your hand, type it in on your cell phone, whatever it takes for you to remember them.

Last but not least, you do have a **summer reading assignment**. You need to purchase/rent/borrow the novel *Born to Run by Christopher McDougall* and read it during summer break. Since it is a main component of the class throughout the entire term, it is vital that you read it.

Just remember those dates and feel free to e-mail Mark or me at any time with any questions. I look forward to meeting you in the fall. It’ll be here before we know it!

Sincerely your FA and Fig Professor,

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