Dear Social Services FIG Student:

Hi there! My name is Ashley Redd and I will be your FIG assistant for the Fall. I’m SO excited to meet you! I’ll be entering my third year at the U of O as a junior this fall. I’m from a small town called Flowood in a faraway land known as Mississippi (or Miss’ippi as my family pronounces it). I’m majoring in Educational Foundations with a minor in Anthropology. My goal is to join Teach for America after I graduate and teach while I earn my graduate degree. Eventually I would like to work as an administrator or superintendent for schools in developing countries as well as areas of our own country where education is consistently failing (such as the Mississippi Delta). I have always loved working with children and am very passionate about education. Something else you will learn I am very passionate about is animals. While I love all animals, rabbits are probably my favorite. I currently have two bunnies—Samson, an overweight geriatrics rabbit who desires little more from life than to sleep, eat, and give kisses; and Munch (short for Munchkin), a feisty little fuzz ball who loves to eat my carpet and go on car rides. My ideal Saturday evening is cuddling up with these guys and watching whatever obscurely interesting show I can find on Netflix. But that’s enough about me, now on to the guy you’re really going to want to get to know, our College Connections professor Dan Close!

Professor Close has been teaching at the U of O for 34 years. Outside of academia, he sings as a Tenor in the Eugene Concert Choir. The choir does several major concerts throughout the year in Eugene. He’s also a big fan of hiking, backpacking and traveling. In fact, he and his wife walked the entire length of the Oregon coast last year. Outside of his work at the University, Professor Close helps to develop study and intern programs for students in India, Southeast Asia and Latin America. He also works to provide expert witness testimony in criminal cases (ask him about this sometime, it’s REALLY interesting). I had the privilege of taking one of Professor Close’s classes, Educational Studies 111 with my FIG my freshman year. It was absolutely my favorite class that I have taken thus far. Professor Close is truly an inspirational person with many stories to share. We are both very excited about the FIG!

Our FIG, Social Services will incorporate Family and Human Services 213, Issues and Problems with Children and Families (FHS 213) with Psychology 202, Mind and Society (PSY 202). The incorporation of these two courses will allow you to dig deeper into the problems of child/youth development and families by taking a psychological approach to observing human interactions and human nature. Two really passionate and experienced professors teach the FHS 213 course from the Family and Human Services Program in the College of Education. Both Professor Close and Professor Alltucker have received teaching awards and are stimulating, knowledgeable and entertaining.

As a FIG, we will be doing several activities outside of class throughout the term including a pizza party at Dan’s house. I would love to hear any suggestions you have for group activities or outings. They can be academic or just for fun! In addition to group activities, Professor Close encourages you to go see him in his office hours which are held in the Residence
Halls. If you visit his office hours, you become eligible for a Lottery to have dinner at his home the night before fall final exams!

Professor Close and I would like you to read the book *Mountains Beyond Mountains* over the summer prior to our first meeting. It’s an easy read and a very inspirational story. The author, Tracy Kidder, spoke at the U of O in 2011.

Our first mandatory meeting as a group will be on **Friday, September 21st**. This is the Friday of Week of Welcome. Several FIGs will meet in **Columbia 150** at 10am and we will proceed to a different location from there. Please be sure you’re on time for this initial meeting. I would also love to do something as a group after this meeting if you are available (I could show you around campus). We will also be attending University Convocation together on **Sunday, September 23rd**. After Convocation there is always a picnic for all of the FIG students. This is a great opportunity for everyone to get to know each other.

After you receive this letter, please shoot me an email with your name and email address as well as a little about yourself. Also, let me know if you have any questions or concerns about the FIG or just college life in general. My email address is aredd@uoregon.edu. Lastly, please remember to bring your **Student Handbook** with you to our Week of Welcome meeting. We hope you’re having a spectacular summer! Can’t wait to hear from you!

Sincerely,

Ashley Redd and Professor Close