FIRST YEAR STUDENTS
PLANNING YOUR FIRST QUARTER CLASSES

We want to provide some suggestions as to the types of courses you should consider taking during your first quarter. It is important for you to realize that there is no established program of courses you should take. Your decisions about courses should be based upon what you want to create for yourself in your college education.

You can review descriptions of courses in the UC Davis General Catalog (available online at http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/UCDWebCatalog). The Class Schedule and Registration Guide (also available online at http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/csrg) tells you which courses are being offered each quarter along with their time and location. With this information, choose courses that interest you. UC Davis offers over 300 lower division courses (numbered 1-99 in the Catalog) that are appropriate for new students. Some of these courses will introduce major areas of study; others will provide necessary background in writing, mathematics, and critical thinking.

What courses should you choose for your first quarter?

Your choices are many, but here are some guidelines:

1. **English Composition** courses are an invaluable aid in honing your skills in thinking clearly and writing well. If you haven't satisfied the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR), doing so by completing course WLD 57E should be your top priority. If you have met the ELWR, consider taking other courses stressing more advanced work in composition during your first year: Comparative Literature 1, 2, 3 or 4, English 3, Native American Studies 5, or University Writing Program (UWP) 1,18,19.

2. **Mathematics** provides the basis for work in all of the sciences. If you are interested in studying science, enroll in the level of mathematics that seems appropriate to your high school background. If you are interested in a major in the mathematical or physical sciences (chemistry, computer science, geology, mathematics, physics, statistics) you should plan on taking the Mathematics 21 calculus series; majors in all other areas of natural science and social science will accept the Mathematics 16 calculus sequence. Plan on taking the pre-calculus qualifying examination offered during the Orientation Program over the summer or at the beginning of the quarter to confirm your entry level into mathematics courses.

3. Choose courses that introduce you to a field of study. Select courses that will introduce you to the subject matter of an area you might choose as a major. Almost all majors offer introductory level courses recommended for students in their first quarter. (However, there are some important exceptions: For example, Economics 1A and 1B are more suitable for the sophomore year and Biological Sciences 1A requires chemistry as a prerequisite.)

4. Choose courses that interest you. Choose courses representing topic areas that are of particular importance to you as a citizen of the world...courses in cultural diversity, in world peace, in environmental issues. Select from areas that are important to you for your education in the creative and performing arts...courses in art, in drama and literature, in music appreciation. Choose courses that will contribute to your scientific literacy. You have many opportunities for creating an interesting and challenging first quarter schedule.

5. **Foreign Language course work** is required for all students who plan to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree. These students must complete the 15 unit level in a single language, the equivalent of course 3 in most languages. Many students elect to continue studying a language they began in high school. If you choose to do this, sign up for the course level that seems most appropriate for the background you have. If you decide to review by taking course 1 (and have completed a second or more advanced year of the language in the tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade), you will be graded on a Pass/Not Pass basis rather than receiving a letter grade. As with mathematics, you should confirm your entry level by taking the appropriate Foreign Language Placement Examination offered at the beginning of the quarter.
Will the courses you choose satisfy requirements for graduation?

Yes! Every course you take at this stage in your academic career will meet some requirement. Before you graduate, you must complete at least 180 units. Many of these units will be in your major field of study, but many will be from other courses you choose in the sciences, the humanities and fine arts, and the social sciences.

How many courses should you take your first quarter?

We typically recommend that your first quarter schedule consist of courses totaling about 15 units. To make expected progress toward obtaining your baccalaureate degree you must average 15 units per quarter, so it is important that you plan on completing at least 45 units by the end of the year, and an additional 45 units at the end of each subsequent year.

The faculty will expect you to spend two hours in out-of-class preparation for every hour that you spend in class. For example, a 15 unit course load implies 45 hours of work on your part every week (15 hours in class and 30 hours outside of class). You should consider this workload as you plan your first quarter.

Registration is done in a series of “passes”, each allowing you to enroll in progressively more courses. You should enroll in as many of your desired courses as possible each pass until you reach the number of units you want to take. Don’t wait; the courses you want most may be full later! You can also adjust your schedule during the first 10 days of the quarter.

Academic Advising

Advising at UC Davis takes place on two levels, in your major department and at the College Deans' Office. If you have already selected a major, you should plan to meet with an adviser in your major department early in the quarter. Your department adviser can consult with you about major requirements, course planning and your educational aspirations.

If you have not yet selected a major, you are automatically placed in the L&S Academic Options Program. L&S Outreach Advising sites are located on-campus residence hall areas and are staffed by a team of L&S Residence Hall Advising Team (RHAT) Peer Advisers. Through individual advising, group sessions, and programs, this team will work with you during your first year helping with course planning and exploring your options before selecting a major. Academic advisers are available in the L&S Undergraduate Education and Advising Office, 200 Social Sciences and Humanities Building, for Academic Options Program students not living in a university residence hall complex.

We hope this information is helpful as you begin to plan for your academic life at UC Davis. Within the broad context of a liberal education, we encourage you to think carefully about what is important to you. The University, the College of Letters and Science, and your major department have established requirements for graduation, but you have many choices of ways to meet those requirements. You'll seldom be told exactly what to take. More frequently, your advisers will suggest a range of courses from which you can choose.

The Dean's Assembly for new students who did not attend the Orientation Program during the summer will be held at the beginning of the quarter. You should consult the “Orientation” section of the Class Schedule and Registration Guide for the exact date, time and location. We look forward to meeting you at the Assembly.