COS and FPU staff, faculty and student peer mentors hosted a 5-day residential Summer Bridge orientation at Fresno Pacific’s main campus in June. 32 incoming freshmen majoring in a STEM field lived in the dorms together, attended classes together and studied together in preparation for the upcoming challenge of starting college in a STEM major.

“The Summer Bridge program was a wonderful, uplifting experience,” said COS Anthropology Professor Marla Prochnow, who partnered with Jane Thomas, a COS English professor, to teach college study skills. “The students were great, it was a pleasure to work with the PASEO Program.”

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Summer Bridge Participant quotes:

“It’s good to have some general math and science review before starting college, and the peer leaders and counselors give you a pretty accurate idea of how college is.”
- Jasmin Ramos

“It made me realize college was a whole different setting than High School, where you actually had to take care of yourself and keep track of all your assignments and deadlines.”
- Isis Frausto

- Bridge prepares students to thrive in college STEM

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The orientation began with a luncheon for students and their parents and included an information session to acquaint parents with what their students can expect as they work to complete their education. The students then took part in four days of Science and Math Prep classes and also went through a four-day class intended to prepare them for success in the college culture.

“We were overwhelmed by the positive response we received from the students and their parents,” said Charles Rush, Activity Lead for the PASEO Program. “After working so hard for so long with the planning of the event it was very gratifying to know that the students got so much out of it.”

Students also became well acquainted with their peers. “It was a great and fun experience, and it was really nice having so many familiar faces in class on the first day, said Jessariah Smith, a freshman biology major.

After classes the participants studied together, working on homework assignments in afternoon study groups and after evening sessions ended. “We wanted to create an environment where they felt secure working together, but had a very realistic experience of college life,” said Rush. “We maintained high expectations for them and they rose to the challenge. And, best of all, they found out that they had a great time doing it.”

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From the Director’s Desk

Dr. Robert Urtecho

To our new PASEO students: I’d like to wish you a warm welcome to the College of the Sequoias.

Over the years I have seen many students come and go. One thing they all have in common is the strong desire to succeed in science and mathematics. Perhaps the greatest obstacle all of us have in starting a new endeavor is overcoming some of our own doubt about our abilities to succeed. Another thing I have noticed about those that pass their classes and transfer is that they don’t give up. Yes, they sometimes do poorly on a test for which they thought they had prepared well. But the heroic act they perform is that they learn from the experience and find additional strategies for achieving success.

As you embark on this new chapter in your life, I’d like to encourage you to work hard and not give up when the road gets rough. Instead, focus on correcting what was not learned and continuing with your classes to the best of your abilities. Find help from the students and faculty to help you master the concepts you need to learn to achieve a high mark. Take advantage of the resources that COS has to help you succeed. Although it will ultimately come down to what you do, there are many on this campus who are pulling for your success and who stand ready to give you a hand when you need it (such as: counselors, MESA, PASEO, SETA, EOPS, Financial Aid, the Scholarship Office, the Career Center, to name just a few). And don’t forget that you will have the opportunity to affect the success of those around you by studying together, tutoring each other, and making each other feel at home at COS. Doing so makes everybody better and stronger.

As you get better and better at dealing with the challenges of your major, you will learn all the skills you need to achieve a high grade point average and to earn your place as a STEM professional. One of my greatest pleasures comes from hearing about the achievements and opportunities our students find after COS whether it is the student who spends the months before her transfer trying to unravel Knot Theory at UTEP or the young man who had hardly ever left the valley who was sent to the prestigious CERN Laboratory in Switzerland during his summer internship at Stanford University. I look forward to watching your success here and hearing of your success beyond COS in the coming years.

Summer Bridge students respond positively

Continued from Page 2

Other sessions included fireside chats on topics like maintaining good health and appropriate socializing in college. Students also enjoyed a “behind-the scenes” tour of the Chaffee Zoo which emphasized the science behind running a zoo.

Students were overall very positive in their feedback, although they suggested some good changes which will be considered for next year’s event. The PASEO staff hopes to include participants from the 2011 orientation in the planning process for Summer 2012. Participants from this summer will be taking two classes together this fall and many will share common math classes.

Next year’s orientation is planned for the last week of July and the program’s goal is to double the number of student participants.

What I liked about Summer Bridge:

“...the way the classes work, how it focuses on the majors that we are pursuing. I like the program because it kind of gives us a heads up in what is coming our way in the start of fall schedule. We get to see and experience what it is like to be a college student.”

Student comment, Program survey June 2011

“Students do best when they develop strong bonds with instructors and other students, and this orientation certainly helped them do that. College can be a shock for students coming straight from high school, and I think these students will now be ready to face the challenges ahead.”

Jane Thomas, Summer Bridge Instructor
Activities:

- Sponsorship of Expanding Your Horizons (EYH) Conference and Latino Youth Leadership Academy (LYLA)
- Coordination of STEM workshops for LLYA and EYH with PASEO, MESA and SETA students
- Recruitment of first PASEO cohort
- Upcoming trips (with SETA and MESA):
  - UC Merced campus visit—Sept. 17th
  - Pre–Med Conference (UC Davis) _ Oct 8&9th
  - SACNAS Free day—October 29th
  - UC Santa Barbara—November 5th & 6th
  - “Via Public Transit”

Equipment Acquisitions:

- FTIR
- Anatomy Study models, slides for MESA Center and labs at main campus and Hanford Center
- Verniers and Gas Chromatgraph attachments
- Thermal Expansion Apparatus
- Oscilloscopes
- Herbarium case
- Stereo microscopes
- Bio Pacs
- Molecule models

PASEO Mission Statement

Program staff are working with an advisory committee to develop a permanent mission statement. The proposed statement below will be presented and discussed at a meeting in January. We welcome suggestions.

We pledge to:

- To provide and to help our students connect with enrichment opportunities in math and sciences
- To provide excellent instruction and instructional support services to students pursuing a degree in math or science
- To respect and value the diversity of our students, staff and faculty
- To promote awareness of the importance of science and mathematics education to the future of our nation
- To contribute to the development of mathematics and science professionals in the San Joaquin Valley

Other 2011 PASEO activities and upcoming events