

## Educational Opportunity Program

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## The "Shoes" of a Peer Advisor

The EOP program is widely known for its cool, friendly, and helpful peer advisors. But what exactly does a peer advisor do? Peer advisors are college students, who help first-time freshmen bridge the gap between high school and college life. Peer advisors help students choose classes and also keep their students informed of requirements and deadlines. Peer advisors also play a critical role by helping first-time freshmen to stay focused and on track.

The academic requirements for potential peer advisors are: a minimum of 55 units and a 2.5 grade point average. Once those requirements are met, the application process begins. Nearly 100 applications are reviewed by a panel of three counselors. The applicants are narrowed down to about 50 and then eventually into about 15-20 applicants who will become the future peer advisors. Applicants from all majors are considered. "We don't screen students based on their majors, but for those students who are considering people-oriented fields, peer advising is a great way to get experience" says MuiVuong, an EOP counselor at Fresno State.



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## Welcome Freshmen

With the fall semester in full swing, EOP had its annual Freshmen Welcome. At the first session consisted of 185 plus first time freshman waiting to be showered with words of wisdom by the counselors and peer advisors. These two-hour sessions provided students with critical pieces of information about the resources that the program has to offer.

EOP director, Maxine McDonald, kicked off the welcome with a motivational speech. She encouraged students to take advantage of EOP and the resources the program offers. She closed off her welcome by giving the students a brief overview of the history of the program and its contribution on current leaders such as Lieutenant Governor, Cruz Bustamante. Following McDonald's welcome, the three counselors; Marie Provencio, Darlene Laney, and MuiVuong were introduced along with Counselor Interns; Robert Pagesmith and Dennis Padilla.

Nancy Griesser, an EOP counselor talked to students about the importance of choosing a career. She provided vital information about the various services that are offered on campus

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Peer Advisor's Favorite Quote:

"To give anything less than your best is to sacrifice the gift."

# Important Dates

## FALL SEMESTER 2002

October 30th – Freshmen Academic Advising Session 1  
2pm-5pm @USU 308-309

October 31st – Freshmen Academic Advising Session 2  
10am-Noon @USU308-309

November 4th – Registration for spring semester begins

November 6th – Freshmen Academic Advising Session 3  
2pm-5pm @USU308-309

November 7th – Freshmen Academic Advising Session 4  
10am-Noon @USU308-309

November 19th – Last day to drop class without a serious and compelling reason

November 28th thru December 1st – Thanksgiving break

December 11th – Last day of instruction

December 16 – Final exams begin

December 20th – Fall semester ends

December 23-January 8th – Winter Recess

# The Max Factor

Welcome to an academic year of growth, experiences, new challenges, and accomplishments. We are very pleased you are here at Fresno State and look forward to working with you through the Educational Opportunity Program.

I encourage you to use our services to help you achieve your academic and personal goals. You will find the EOP staff to be very friendly and supportive. They have a wealth of experience in helping students just like you succeed in college.

This is a semester of change! As you know, the campus is in the process of developing and implementing a new administrative system (Peoplesoft) which will allow you to access many services on-line through the My Fresno State Portal. On-line class registration, financial aid status checks, grades, student records, and financial services will all be available to you 24 hours a day. Your patience with us as this new system is perfected is greatly appreciated. I am confident that it will allow us to provide faster and more efficient services in the future. The registration schedule is also changing. You will be able to select Spring 2003 classes in November rather than in January. Spring classes will begin on January 8<sup>th</sup> 2003, which is two weeks earlier than last year.

All these changes will make a significant difference in the way we provide quality services to you. I encourage you to embrace change, ask questions, and consult with your counselor on a regular basis.

Remember that the EOP staff is here for you! I wish you the very best in your personal and academic endeavors.



## Fresno State Welcomes Dr. Oliaro



The fall 2002 semester has brought many changes to the campus, such as the Peoplesoft system and its electronic registration system. The campus has also seen changes with the addition of Dr. Paul Oliaro as the new Vice-President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students.

Dr. Oliaro is no stranger to the vice presidency, having held the same position at West Chester University in Pennsylvania. "My wife and I had always discussed the possibility of moving to California," says Dr. Oliaro. His tenure as vice president has only been a couple of months; but he has clear goals. One goal is to have self-serve programs such as online registration perform more efficiently. "We need to make sure the technology that has been implemented to provide self service to students is working better and better all the time," commented Dr. Oliaro. As the new Vice President of Student Affairs, Dr. Oliaro would like to give some words of advise to those students who want to succeed. "There are a tremendous number of resources and people here to help students succeed. The key for students is to ask questions and to know what resources are available to them."

## Reminder



We would like to remind all freshmen to make appointments with their respective counselors before November 20<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to make an appointment, please stop by the EOP office in the Joyal Administration Building Room 224 or contact the office at 287-1787.

Peer Advisor's Favorite Quote:

"The best thing in life is doing the things people say you can't do."

*"Peer Advisor" continued from pg 1*

Aside from the qualifications, the role of peer advisors requires responsibility and maturity. "It takes a lot of will, leadership, and responsibility," says Roberto Vaca, senior and EOP peer advisor. "Many students look up to you as a role model when you're a peer advisor. You can't just talk you have to back up your talk in a sense," says Vaca. "If you tell your students to get good grades and study, you have to do the same thing because they look up to you and we have to set the example."

The role of a peer advisor doesn't stop at school. Peer advisors must be able to find ways to manage their time between school, work, sports, and family. "You always have to be at school doing your work but at the same time giving time to your family, girlfriend, boyfriend, religion, and all the other things you do outside of school," says Vaca.

Peer advisors must also be creative and knowledgeable about the campus resources. "We have to be creative because students come to us asking for suggestions and advice and we have to be able to provide that to them," says Laura Garcia, senior and EOP peer advisor. "You also have to be aware of the support services other than the ones offered by EOP because students will come in to our office and request these services so we must be able to point them in the right direction," says Garcia.



*"Freshmen" continued from pg 1*

geared toward helping undecided students find their niche in order to pursue a career of their choice.

Capping off the welcome were guest speakers Sonya Hildreth and Ray Sanchez from the Learning Resource Center. They explained the various services such as tutoring and tutoring hours that are available through the Learning Resource Center.

**Reminder**



Attention all EOP students! If you would like to stay up to date with important deadlines, scholarship information, and EOP news, then you must be subscribed to the EOP Listserv. Be sure to check your Fresno State email regularly so that you are kept up to date. Please contact Mui Vuong at 278-1787 to subscribe.

## Undecided About Your Major?

We have all had dreams of becoming doctors, lawyers, and firefighters. Then, we realized that we have to take many math and science courses in order to achieve our goals. If you still want to pursue those dreams, then more power to you. However, between 20 and 50 percent of all first-time freshmen are undeclared, according to the Bulldog B.A.R.K, a guide for first time freshmen. Also over 60 percent of students change their majors at one point of their academic careers.

If you fall into the category of undeclared, then it is important to know what your interests are, investigate your options and have others share their experiences of their selected majors. Take classes that you feel might interest you. If you need further help with selecting a major you can visit the Career Services Office, located in the Joyal Administration Building, Room 256.

The Office Of Advising Services also provides a one-hour workshop to help undeclared students. The workshop is called COMPASS (Combining Opportunities to Meet Personal Academic and Student Success). "This is a workshop for students who are having difficulty focusing on a particular major or career goal," says Sharon Smith who coordinates the COMPASS workshops here at Fresno

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Peer Advisor's Favorite Quote:

"Life is lived forwards but understood backwards." - Kierkegaard

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State. Smith would like to point out that the COMPASS workshops do not provide career or major assessments of students and their skills. “The workshop is designed to help students start identifying some things about themselves such as their strengths and their interests. The COMPASS workshop also offers information about other workshops and resources that are offered to undeclared students.

If you ever thought that being undeclared was a bad thing, think again. “I think it’s exciting quite frankly that students are undeclared because they are exploring their options. Students have made a decision to take this time to explore possibilities, to see what’s the best fit for them because that will probably be something that they will doing for a long period of time,” says Mrs. Smith.

If you are interested in attending the COMPASS workshops, you can reserve your seat by calling (559) 278-1787 or you can stop by the Joyal Administration Building, Room 224 for more information.

## Holidays Around the World

One trademark of EOP is the number of ethnically diverse students. African American, Hmong, Hispanic, and Indian are represented in the program and the diversity can also be seen in the EOP office with its administrators, counselors, peer advisors, and student assistants. The representation of different ethnic backgrounds gives the office a colorful and rich feeling.

The diversity has led many people to discover and appreciate other cultures and ideas that would have otherwise been looked over. One of these ideas is the holiday called, “El Dia de los Muertos” or Day of the Dead. The Day of the Dead traces its roots to the time of the Aztecs during the Spanish Inquisition. The Aztecs would celebrate the day of the dead in order to pay their respects to those who had died. When the Spanish invaded Mexico in the 1500’s, they saw the holiday as a hedonistic ritual and thus had the holiday moved from July (according to the present calendar) to November. Almost 500 years later, the Day of the Dead has become a holiday celebrated in most Latin countries.

Generally the day’s activities consist of visits to the graves by family members. At the gravesite, family members engage in adorning the gravesite with large bright flowers such as Chrysanthemums. After the gravesite visits, the families have picnics while interacting with other family and community members who gather at the cemetery. Everyone often shares stories with each other. The meals prepared for these picnics are usually meat dishes in spicy sauces, special egg-batter bread, cookies, chocolate, and sugary treats in a variety of animal or skull shapes.



Congratulations!

We would like to congratulate EOP students Alma Garcia, Susana Lucero, Ramon Nava, and Roberto Vaca for being chosen as 2003 McNair Scholars.



**Reminder to All Students.** Fresno State registration has been moved from it timeslot at the end of the semester to the week of November 4<sup>th</sup>. If you are planning to register online you need to have a valid email account with Fresno State. If you don’t have an Fresno State account visit [www.csufresno.edu](http://www.csufresno.edu) to register for a free Fresno State email account.



**The Freshmen Academic Advising workshops will be held on October 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> and November 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. Academic advising workshops are mandatory for all EOP freshmen. Please call the EOP Office at 278-1787 to reserve a seat.**

### QUESTIONS?? COMMENTS??

If you have any comments or suggestions, contact Mui Vuong at 278-1787.

Peer Advisor’s Favorite Quote:

“So many things to do in this world that there should not be any time left to think of a quote.”