

Dear ,

Welcome to Salem State University! As part of Salem State's *First Year Experience* we are excited you are coming and look forward to meeting you. J.D. Scrimgeour is an English Professor and a Faculty Fellow for the First Year Experience at Salem State, and Mathew Chetnik is the Associate Director for the First Year Experience. Together—with many other people at the university—we are dedicated to helping you get the best start possible for your college career.

We are writing to make you aware of some programs that Salem State has specifically for first-year students like yourself and to encourage you to enroll in them. These are opportunities for you to take charge of your education and study what interests you while completing your general education requirements.

The first is *learning communities*. In learning communities, a group of students take the same two or three classes that investigate a theme from a variety of perspectives. The professors of the courses design them so that they overlap, and occasionally all the professors will meet with the students at once. The learning communities are limited to twenty students, and students in them generally form strong bonds with both their classmates and their professors while gaining an understanding about the value of different disciplines.

Please check out this link to learn more about the specific learning communities being offered this fall. <http://www.salemstate.edu/11883.php>.

If you are a veteran, we hope you will enroll in the **Veteran Scholars** learning community. If you don't have a major yet, you might want to sign up for **Creating a Happy Life**, a learning community that lets you consider possible career and life choices. The other learning communities: **Modern South Asia, Education and Health for a Sustainable Earth and Self**, and **Gender and Identity**, are open to all students, although Gender and Identity requires that students have placed out of ENL 101.

Each community offers a selection of courses that meet requirements of the university's core curriculum. So think about taking your world history class with a focus on South Asia or your health and wellness class while exploring environmental issues.

You will be able to enroll in these learning communities when you come for orientation, or, to ensure a spot before they fill up, you can fill out the online form and return it to us.

Passion Courses are another exciting option. Passion courses are taught by faculty that have developed an interest in a subject, often outside of their normal field of expertise. This fall, passion courses are being offered in Interdisciplinary Studies, Speech, History, and English. Again, all these passion courses will fulfill

requirements in the university's core curriculum. So be adventurous and try a course on a topic that grabs you. Want to learn about how culture gets created by exploring local recreational and cultural offerings? Try **Blues, Brews and BBQs**. How about learning about economics and the environment while Sea Kayaking? Sign up for **An Environmental Journey By Sea Kayak**. Interested in Native American Writing, or Writing Humor, or Performance Poetry? These are just a few of the possible passion courses being offered.

Check out all the offerings at <http://www.salemstate.edu/11882.php>. You can enroll in passion courses during registration, or, if you wish to ensure a spot early, fill out the online form and return it to us.

Feel free to contact either of us with questions about these opportunities. And if you haven't already done so, be sure to sign up for an orientation session. We look forward to meeting seeing you this summer and working with you in the fall.

Sincerely,

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