

Summer Freshman Start eases transition to the University

Summer on the University of Nevada, Reno campus is a relatively calm, peaceful time during which students can focus on one or two subjects and choose from more than 600 classes offered in three condensed terms. And thanks to Summer Freshman Start, it's also a time when incoming freshmen get their first taste of University life while completing the prerequisites required to enroll in English 101, Math 120 or Math 126 their first fall semester.

Since 2005, more than 560 newly admitted University of Nevada students have taken classes through the program, which is designed to give freshmen a head start

toward degree completion.

"Summer Freshman Start is a great opportunity for students to get ahead or stay on target for the rotation of requirements for their degrees and for degree completion in four years," said Kerri Garcia, director of Summer Session and Summer Freshman Start.

"Student success rates for English 098 and Math 096 are higher in Summer Session than in fall, likely because students have fewer distractions and are taking fewer classes. That achievement helps incoming freshmen start their

first fall semesters prepared to perform well and confident that they can keep up in their classes—and statistics show that retention rates are higher for students who take a course in their 'freshman summer.'"

Jillean Velarde, an 18-year-old freshman sociology major who took Math 096 and English 098 this summer, says the program helped prepare her for her five-class course load this fall in more ways than one.

"It helped me so much," Velarde said. "It was a really good pace and I could focus a lot better—plus, I was caught up on credits when school started and familiar with campus. It really made me feel more at home and comfortable at the University."

Amit Saini, a lecturer in the University's Department of Mathematics and Statistics, agrees wholeheartedly that Summer Freshman Start helps ensure student success on a number of levels. He has taught Math 096 classes the last two summers.

"Everyone likes to get ahead," Saini said. "With Summer Freshman Start, students are not only getting ahead, but usually taking care of

something that is not their strength—all in five weeks. They usually get to focus on just one topic, so they seem enthusiastic every day."

For more about the University's Summer Freshman Start program, visit www.freshmanstart.unr.edu.

—Sarah Purdy '02

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