

TEACHING ASSISTANT TRAINING AND EVALUATION PROGRAM (TATEP)

APPROVED BY APC 22 MAY 1991

PURPOSE OF TATEP

The program is intended to improve undergraduate teaching, enhance the classroom experiences of graduate teaching assistants, and respond to the need for more systematic preparation and evaluation of teaching assistants. For international teaching assistants, it will supplement machinery already in place to evaluate and promote English language competency.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROGRAM

Teaching assistants are defined as all graduate students who deliver lectures, assume responsibilities for sections of courses identified as being taught by professors and lecturers, teach in laboratories and/or studios, or have classroom contacts with students. The definition does not include graduate students' graders who have no direct contact with students.

MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAM

The program will be managed by the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) under the supervision of the Associate Provost and Dean of Faculties. It will be the responsibility of the CTE to plan and conduct the university-wide aspects of the program and coordinate university-wide activities with the colleges, departments, and their program components. The Associate Provost and Dean of Faculties will be responsible for liaison with the Office of Graduate Studies, International Student Services, the English Language Institute, and Measurement and Research Services.

The CTE will be responsible for monitoring compliance of all departments employing teaching assistants with the requirement that new teaching assistants complete during the first semester of employment the appropriate components of the university and departmental training programs. Each semester, the CTE will make a compliance report to the Associate Provost and Dean of Faculties by the twelfth class day.

The CTE will also be responsible for monitoring the compliance of academic departments with the requirement that, during their first semester of employment, teaching assistants complete a semester-long course or program dealing with topics and issues connected with effective communication and pedagogical practices. At the time that each semester's final grades are due at the Registrar's office, the CTE will make a compliance report on the semester-long training program to the Associate Provost and Dean of Faculties.

COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

The TATEP will be comprised of three major parts.

University-wide Workshop Program: This part consists of an eight hour university-wide workshop. This workshop will be prepared and conducted by the CTE to acquaint teaching assistants with their teaching roles, with pedagogical methods, with ethical and legal responsibilities, and with classroom duties.

College/Department/Unit Workshop: The second component of the program will be a college/department/unit pre-semester workshop to acquaint new teaching assistants with the discipline-specific elements of teaching. Each academic unit will provide its own training personnel and materials for these workshops. Depending upon the size of the academic unit, training in this phase may be organized along departmental, program, or college lines.

Long-Term Departmental Programs: Colleges, departments, or other functional training units will follow their pre-semester training with semester-long courses or programs consisting of regularly-scheduled workshops dealing with specific pedagogical and classroom issues and responding to teaching assistant questions arising over the course of the semester. These courses should build on existing departmental training programs whenever possible. The CTE will accept grant proposals (up to \$500) for support of the development of pre-semester departmental orientations and semester-long courses.

A proposed model for each of the three components of the training program is appended to this implementation report.

SCHEDULING

The university-wide generic orientation will take place seven times: before the first class day, during the first and second week of classes for the Fall and Spring semesters, and before Summer Session I.

The TATEP will be offered for the first time in August 1991. Because it will be necessary for new teaching assistants--including international graduate students making visa and travel arrangements--to be in residence during the week before Fall 1991 semester classes to take part in the training program, academic departments should begin advising newly-admitted prospective graduate assistants of the training requirement immediately.

New students must complete the pre-semester discipline-specific training component in order to hold TA positions. They must also complete the university-level component by the twelfth class day. Where required, new TA's must complete the long-term course or program in the first long semester of employment. Colleges, departments, or other functional training units should plan to initiate the long-term program in the Fall semester of 1991.

Students with previous teaching experience must complete the university-wide portion of the training by the twelfth class day of the first semester in which they are employed as teaching assistants. Departments/colleges/units have the option to use their existing funds to pay stipends for TA's who arrive prior to the beginning of the semester.

LOGISTICS

By, respectively, July 1st for the fall semester and December 1st for the spring semester, each academic department employing graduate assistants shall provide to the CTE a head count of all new graduate teaching assistants with classroom or laboratory responsibilities to assist the CTE in planning the university-wide workshop. Any additions to this head count shall be reported to the CTE at least one week before the beginning of the pre-semester program.

It is the responsibility of each department admitting graduate students to advise all prospective new teaching assistants in writing that they will not be permitted to teach classes, supervise laboratories or have other classroom contact with undergraduates until they have completed the appropriate portions of the orientation and are concurrently enrolled in the long-term departmental program. Likewise, the academic units will be responsible for notifying prospective teaching assistants about the TATEP.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Each academic department employing graduate teaching assistants shall develop an appropriate set of procedures and evaluation instruments to employ in monitoring the performance of teaching assistants each semester. The CTE shall receive copies of these procedures and instruments for review by the first day of the week preceding fall classes.

DEFICIENCY IN TEACHING

All teaching assistants who are evaluated by their employment departments and are found to be lacking in pedagogical, communications, or interpersonal skills required for effective classroom performance shall be placed for one semester in a probationary status, which will be communicated to the CTE. The CTE will offer to these students programs for improvement of teaching ability. All teaching assistants on probation who are again evaluated as deficient in teaching in the subsequent semester shall either be retrained, reassigned, or dropped from responsibilities as a teaching assistant. The CTE will be responsible for monitoring from semester to semester teaching assistants placed on probation. The CTE will make a compliance report on teaching assistants placed on probation to the Associate Provost and Dean of Faculties by the twelfth class day of each long semester.