

**THE GRADUATE TEACHING
ASSISTANT PROGRAM
AT
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY**

**Carol Sigelman
Associate VP for Research
& Graduate Studies**

Goals

To expand University-wide GTA training to better prepare graduate assistants for their roles, to encourage more active mentoring at the departmental level, and to create a career ladder to prepare students for future teaching roles.

Approach

- Day-long orientation at start of semester
- Instructional Practicum (teaching demo with feedback)
- Oral Language Proficiency Exam
- Online GTA Certification Course
- Professional Issues Workshop
- Department- and course-based training and supervision
- Evaluation of GTAs by mentors
- Evaluations by GTAs of their experiences
- University-wide Outstanding GTA Awards
- Career ladder to appointment as Teaching Fellow (teaching independently with mentoring) or PT instructor

Online GTA Certification Course Modules

- Writing syllabi
- Principles of teaching
- Teaching strategies
- Instructional technology
- Assessment
- Interaction with students
- Diversity

Each module has an assignment (e.g., comment on another GTA's classroom problem, analyze a test)

Pass-Fail, One Credit, No Cost
Notation on Transcript

Sample Department Initiatives

- Biological Sciences: Weekly meetings to prepare for intro course labs and weekly feedback from coordinators
- Computer Science: Department orientation on the undergraduate curriculum, learning styles, academic integrity
- Physics: One-credit communication skills course each semester for two years

Evaluation

- Students rate department- and course-based training more useful than the orientation or online course.
- Yet many GTAs say their mentors do not explicitly train them or observe them and give feedback.
- General orientation and training are viewed as helpful, but can go only so far because GTA fields and assignments are so diverse.
- Therefore, current efforts center on strengthening department-based training.