

From: Teaching@Pitt <teaching@pitt.edu>

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Subject: New Teaching Assistant Orientation and Graduate Student Teaching Initiative Plans for AY2020-21

Dear Directors of Graduate Studies, Faculty TA Coordinators, and Graduate Administrators:

As we look ahead to implementing the Flex@Pitt model in AY 20-21, I wanted to bring to your attention a few ways in which the Graduate Student Teaching Initiative and the University Center for Teaching and Learning are providing support for graduate student teaching assistants and teaching fellows, as well as graduate students interested generally in pedagogical professional development.

New Teaching Assistant Orientation

The New Teaching Assistant Orientation (NTAO) in fall 2020 will be in a modified format which will consist of a combination of remote synchronous (live) and asynchronous sessions. The live virtual event is [Friday, August 14 at 12-2 p.m.](#) which will be recorded and will be available for viewing for those unable to attend.

When TAs register on the following link [New Teaching Assistant Orientation \(NTAO\) | Welcome Session](#), they will be registered for the asynchronous events and will receive instructions to access sessions. Asynchronous sessions will cover similar topics and skills as in years past with a focus on [Flex@Pitt](#). We will provide attendance/participation information to departments. At a minimum, asynchronous sessions will include "Role of the TA," "Getting Started in the Classroom," "Dealing with Difficult Situations," and "Preventing and Monitoring Cheating and Plagiarism," but see below for additional offerings available to both new and returning TAs/TFs. Please visit [NTAO website](#) for additional information.

Workshops

The Teaching Center's remote workshop offerings on all things Flex@Pitt (*Canvas, Zoom, Panopto*, Incorporating Active Learning in Remote Lectures, etc.) are generally open to graduate students. They are currently offered during the summer term, and will continue as the new academic year commences. If you have teaching assistants, who, e.g., will be teaching or serving as teaching assistant in the *Zoom* environment, we recommend that you direct them to these offerings, located at: [Teaching Center Events and Workshops](#). Additional recorded workshops may be found at: [Teaching Center Recorded Workshops](#). Additionally, please look for more offerings, including asynchronous workshops, as we move closer to fall term.

We will continue to run the **Achievement in Pedagogy** program through AY 2020-21 with adjustments to allow for new workshop offerings which count towards completion of the badge. We will maximize the value of this credential with workshop offerings focusing on both "general" pedagogical skills and skills highly specific to the Flex@Pitt model.

Consultations

Existing University-wide offerings should be your first choice for support for educational technology such as *Canvas, Panopto*, and *Zoom*. However, as graduate student TAs and TFs, as well as faculty supervisors and program directors, require support *beyond* the University-wide offerings summarized above, please contact us to discuss your needs, including help with development of department-specific programming, at tahelp@pitt.edu.

University Teaching Practicum (FACDEV 2200)

The three-credit pedagogy seminar, FACDEV 2200, will run in the fall term. We will focus on both general pedagogical skills and concepts and skills specific to the Flex@Pitt at the model. Students enrolled in the class also have access to regular consultations with Graduate Student Teaching Initiative staff.

Please look for additional information and offerings as we move closer to the fall term. Please do not hesitate to contact tahelp@pitt.edu with any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

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