

UTA Program Reflection

This semester I had the opportunity to engage with students and faculty through my experience assisting Dr. Mariamma Varghese in Vector Calculus. Dr. Varghese was very understanding and shaped the experience to one that I was comfortable with. She was very supportive and patient with me. I have wanted the chance to get involved with my major outside the classroom, however I was doubtful in my abilities and it took me several years to build up the courage to apply to be an undergraduate teaching assistant and it defiantly paid off. I had an amazing experience when I took Vector Calculus and I wanted the opportunity to share that same experience with the current students. I took part in creating rubrics, grading, office hours, and exam review sessions. Initially, I was overwhelmed and lacked confidence, even though I had done very well in the course work I was engaging with. I learned many soft skills through the process, such as formulating my thoughts and words efficiently to communicate material in a form that was easily understood by fellow students. Through exam reviews, I had the opportunity to practice public speaking and presenting, which is a valuable skill and one that is not focused on inside the classroom. Additionally, teaching mathematics and assisting students' misunderstandings required me to think more critically and carefully about past material. This has helped me sharpen up my fundamentals and has benefited me when the material has reappeared in my current courses.

Overall, the experience as a UTA was a rewarding one. I was given trust and respect. Watching the understanding of mathematics become clear for many students was a great feeling and gave me the confidence in myself and in my abilities to assist a fellow student or colleague in the future. If anyone has a passion for helping students and values the understanding of mathematics among their peers, then I would recommend the program to any undergraduate student. Dr. Varghese and the UTA program coordinators made this experience valuable and was a great way to become involved with a low stress and low risk environment.