

Reflection: UTA program

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I started my journey as an Undergraduate Teaching Assistant for the course Math 254 (Intro to Differential Equations) taught by Dr. Bruce Bayly. I was fortunate enough to get the offer of acting as a UTA for this specific course as amongst all of the mathematics courses that I have completed so far, Differential Equations is my favourite and I love pondering on its concepts and discussing it. Acting as a UTA gave me the opportunity to interact with the professor closely and all the other GTA's for the course and gain teaching experience as well as important skill tips gathered from years of experience by my mentor. I am really thankful to my mentor and the UTA program for exposing me to this invaluable experience.

As a UTA I had several duties like conducting office hours, actively participating in lectures to help students, devote time in tutoring sessions, do the grading for assignments and provide solutions and answer keys for homeworks and exams. All these experiences helped me polish my skills in the subject and even gave me new deeper insights to the topics as I reviewed them and found solutions to different problems again. I also found the way of teaching of my instructor to be quite different from that of the instructor from whom I took the class of Math 254 and the new ideas discussed by my mentor helped me gain new knowledge and applications of the topic in a different way. This not only induced curiosity to learn more but I was also able to impart this knowledge and curiosity to the students of this class as well during the office hours. Conducting the office hours and performing tutoring sessions helped me gain new perspectives of how a problem could be thought about in a completely new approach which arises from several different types of students. It also enhanced my teaching as well as communicating skills as interacting with so many students on a weekly basis automatically gets you out there and improves your ability to communicate and teach, while having their feedback lets you know where you lack and helps improve your teaching skills.

Apart from these duties I really enjoyed being a part of the UTA seminar that was held once a week. The seminar co-coordinators, Dr. Tiffany Jones and Dr. Christina Durón, were super amazing and made the seminar really something to look forward to every week as it had something new to discuss and learn about each week. We were assigned various brainstorming activities which were based on the objective of improving our teaching skills and exploring new methods of teaching. Additionally, interacting with the other UTAs in the seminar really helped in getting feedback and getting to explore different new strategies and approaches used by the other UTAs to tackle challenges. One of the favorite things which I really enjoyed was the LaTeX workshop held in the seminar as it really helped me get that foundation for LaTeX and gave me the approach to go about exploring more about the language; I even created a pretty attractive CV using the LaTeX knowledge gathered from the workshop. Each class each week improved our levels as a UTA and were really with it.

I really enjoyed being a part of this program. I would recommend everyone to apply for this amazing program as it gives you so much scope of learning through all the different kinds of experiences. I would definitely apply for this program again and would recommend anyone interested in improving their ability to know about different perspectives, methods and approaches to a problem and polish their problem solving and research analytics skills. I feel blessed to have been a part of such an amazing opportunity and would like to thank my mentor Dr. Bruce Bayly and the program coordinators Dr. Tiffany Jones and Dr. Christina Durón for making the UTA program such a success and great experience for me.