

Thank You to the UTA Program
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This semester being part of the UTA program for the third time has been a wonderful opportunity. I was able to serve as a teaching assistant to the academic advisor for math and statistics majors, Michelle Ort as she taught a new colloquium for first year majors in the math department. My experience in the past as a TA was with traditional math courses, so I was excited to engage with math in a different way. By mentoring these students as they develop a variety of skills in math beyond the standard curriculum, such as LaTeX, strong resumes, presentation skills, and even math specific study strategies, I learned how to connect with my students and advise them. This was a new role for me but entailed many vital skills that professors and instructors must develop as both roles involve working with students and aiding them in preparing for careers and graduate programs, so this was an incredible opportunity in preparing me for my own future.

This semester, I also saw dramatic improvement in my ability to explain complex mathematical concepts. Each semester I gain so much more confidence in my mathematical ability and teaching ability, and am no longer the meek freshman who struggled to even explain the fundamentals of each course. Because I demonstrate more confidence as I tutor and teach, that confidence impacts the students and I have noticed that they appear to be more confident in their own abilities. Tutoring used to be something that I struggled with and was very intimidated by, but now I enjoy it every week and feel like I am making an impact on the students who I am helping. The students typically bring the most difficult problems to the tutor room each week, so it is also wonderful for those who want to truly master calculus as you are exposed to more challenging problems regularly, which engages you much more with the material. You can learn so much more as a new TA as you see higher caliber problems, and I have been amazed at how seamlessly I transitioned from feeling like the new TA learning from other people to being the confident TA who can work their way through a variety of problems with ease.

Moreover, because I am able to see my students' progress each week in the tutor room, I have also started to see more mathematical ability in myself. Earlier in my math education, I became worried anytime I became mildly confused by a topic, but after seeing so many students work through misunderstanding and confusion in the tutor room, I have better understood how to persevere through these challenges with a growth mindset, which I have taken and applied to my own education. I find it easier to learn new math now than a year ago, and this is because I have more patience with myself and

have allowed myself to grow in my understanding rather than expecting perfection in each topic immediately.

I would recommend this program to every math and statistics undergraduate, regardless of their career aspirations. The communications skills, mentorship and leadership experience, and ability to communicate a variety of complex and abstract ideas can benefit individuals in any field.