

Texas A&M University, Department of Mathematics

Graduate Students **R**eaching for **E**xcellence in **A**cademics and **T**eaching (GREAT) is a teaching assistant training program for mathematics graduate students that includes individualized assistance and mentoring. The program was designed by a graduate student who has been through the challenges of being a teaching assistant. The instruction is short, concise, and to the point, yet extremely comprehensive since it is discipline and university specific.

A series of informal seminars encompasses the standard rules and procedures as well as teaching techniques and exposure to different pedagogical practices. Examples of seminar lessons include:

- University, FERPA and ADA rules and procedures
- Engaging students and communicating effectively with them
- Technology in the classroom
- Teaching students (individually and in a large group) who struggle with mathematics

The program provides individualized support to assist with any problem graduate students may encounter. This "go-to" person can assist with a variety of issues including the following:

- Issues with teaching assignment
- Technological problems
- Assist international students with cultural and language barriers
- Any questions about graduate school
- Person to listen and offer advice
- Complete informal teaching evaluations & follow-up meeting
- The go-to person is also a liaison between the graduate student and the administration, faculty, and staff thereby allowing the graduate students to express their concerns and ask any question to someone who students feel comfortable approaching. The go-to person can then take valid concerns and possible solutions to the administration.
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- My ultimate vision for The GREAT Program is an all-encompassing professional development program that provides support from orientation through graduation. This comprehensive program would focus not only on pedagogical practices, but on graduate students' individual needs to be successful in graduate school and his/her future career. The GREAT Program would also encompass other aspects of professional development, some of which would be geared to nonacademic careers. I would also open the program to postdocs. Additional lessons may include the following:
- Writing and submitting journal articles
- Writing research & teaching statements

• Preparing a CV/Resume

• Preparing slides and posters

- NetworkingDeveloping a web pagePreparing for a final defense
- Searching for jobsInterviewing techniques

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