

June 3, 2009

TO: Tom Rosenbaum, Provost, University of Chicago

FR: Subcommittee on Roles, Responsibilities, and the Monitoring of Teaching of the Committee on Graduate Student Teaching

On June 16, 2008, the Committee on Graduate Student Teaching sent you its "Preliminary Report on Graduate Student Teaching," which largely dealt with graduate teaching compensation. Therein we noted that there were a number of other equally complex issues that required further study and promised to undertake this work during the 2008-09 academic year through the formation of two subcommittees.

A Subcommittee on Roles, Responsibilities, and the Monitoring of Teaching, was formed with the following members: Ramón Gutiérrez (chair; Preston & Sterling Morton Distinguished Professor in United States History and the College), Michael Jones (Associate Dean of the College), Kalina Michalska (Graduate Student, Department of Psychology), Jeff Rufo (Graduate Student, Department of Comparative Literature), and Beth Niestat (staff). We met weekly during the fall quarter of 2008, twice in January of 2009, and together with the other subcommittee of the Committee on Graduate Student Teaching, twice during winter and spring quarters to:

- Examine and sharpen how the roles and responsibilities of graduate student teachers are defined and communicated to faculty and students and
- Explore systems to monitor the experiences of graduate student teachers.

To arrive at the recommendations presented here, we pored over a survey sent to deans of students, who worked with their departments to collect information regarding current work expectations for graduate student teachers and the nature of departmental grievance procedures. Twenty-seven programs representing every academic unit except for the law school, which has only five doctoral students, responded. This survey data was used to identify similarities among the teaching categories across divisions and to consider appropriate and generalizable expectations.

In addition, the subcommittee met with Larry McEnerney, Director of the Writing Program, and consulted with the University ombudsperson and assistant ombudsperson, with graduate student advisors in the Visual Arts Department, and with a number of lead language instructors. Based on our analysis of this information, we offer the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND WORK EXPECTATIONS

There are many ways graduate student teachers are employed at the University of Chicago. Because of this diversity there is a great range of work expectations for every job category. Accordingly, we offer the following job descriptions, along with weekly hourly work expectations, to help guide course instructors regarding what they should expect of their graduate teaching apprentices and to enumerate for graduate students exactly what is expected of them and of instructors.

Teaching opportunities offer graduate students experience that is vital to a well-rounded graduate education, and the recommendations outlined below are meant to maximize the quality of that experience. Teaching, however, is only one part of graduate education. The guidelines below are also meant to set realistic expectations for the amount of time and effort expected for teaching positions so that graduate student teachers will also have sufficient time and energy to focus on their research, writing, and degree completion.

We recommend that these job descriptions be distributed widely and made available online, in conjunction with pedagogical training resources and a teaching opportunity job bank. The faculty, particularly the directors of graduate studies and graduate student teachers themselves should be well aware of these descriptions at the point of contract.

Lecturer

A lecturer should have the primary responsibility for the teaching of a course. Duties should resemble those of a faculty member teaching a course and may include:

- Syllabus design (If teaching the College Core, lecturers may be asked to participate in the creation or modification of a common syllabus.)
- Design and grading of assignments and exams
- Giving lectures, leading classroom discussions, and advising students
- Assigning a final grade
- All lecturers are expected to be available to meet with students outside of the classroom. Regular and reasonable office hours should be announced in class, listed on syllabi, or posted on the office door. If office hours must be cancelled, arrangements should be made for someone to post a notice to this effect on the lecturer's office door.
- Attend course staff meeting if applicable

Lecturers should be expected to work up to 19.5 hours per week in the fulfillment of their duties.

Undergraduate Preceptor

Undergraduate preceptors are hired by departments and programs that require a B.A. essay as part of the graduation requirement for a major. Undergraduate preceptors are expected to perform tutorial duties over the course of two or three quarters. How each program times these duties varies over the course of the academic year. In general, undergraduate preceptors guide students in the formulation, design and data-gathering for their essays during one quarter. In the next quarter they supervise, both collectively and individually, the initial drafting of an essay and its revisions. As each student writing a B.A. essay also has one or two faculty mentors who are responsible for reading the final draft, the final paper and assigning a grade, in the third quarter undergraduate preceptors often help students polish the final essay and begin preparing for summer research the next cohort of students who will write essays the following academic year.

Undergraduate preceptors should:

- Teach students basic research design and data collection through a formal seminar (In some departments undergraduate preceptors should design their own seminar syllabus, and in others a faculty-designed syllabus is used by all undergraduate preceptors.)
- Supervise literature searches in preparation for the essay
- Offer academic advice about the discipline, job trajectories, admission into graduate programs, and substantive intellectual and professional issues
- All undergraduate preceptors are expected to be available to meet with students outside the classroom to offer comments on their research or writing. Regular and reasonable office hours should be announced in class, listed on syllabi, or posted on the office door.

The expected upper limit in the number of students that preceptors should supervise is 15.

In the Biological and Physical Science Divisions, graduate students along with faculty assist College students with B.A. research projects in the course of their laboratory work. Although they may not be identified as undergraduate preceptors, their work parallels that of undergraduate preceptors.

Undergraduate preceptors should be expected to work approximately 15 hours per week in the fulfillment of their duties.

Some graduate programs, the Master of Arts in the Social Sciences for example, utilize tutors also called preceptors, who work closely with master-level students. This special category of tutors is distinct from the undergraduate preceptors defined above, and potentially further distinction

should be made in the preceptor title for these programs for the sake of clarity.

Course and Teaching Assistant

Course and teaching assistantships should provide a mutually beneficial apprenticeship between faculty and students. Assistants should help professors in the teaching enterprise but not necessarily provide assistance in all course responsibilities. Course or teaching assistants may be called on to perform the following tasks as deemed appropriate by the course instructor:

- Attend all classes
- Lead a class or two, supervised by the course instructor
- Help design assignments
- Conduct discussion sections and review sessions
- Arrange for and run audio-visual equipment
- Respond to CHALK postings and assignments
- Meet with students outside the classroom to offer comments on their research or writing. Regular and reasonable office hours should be announced in class, listed on syllabi, or posted on the office door.
- In conjunction with the course instructor, share in the grading responsibilities. The assignment of the final course grade belongs to the instructor and not the assistants.

In relation to their course or teaching assistant, instructors should be expected to:

- Mentor their course or teaching assistant
- Discuss, set, and monitor pedagogical goals with their course or teaching assistant
- Supervise and evaluate a lecture by the course or teaching assistant
- Supervise, calibrate, and generally lead the grading of course assignments and exams
- Assign the final course grade.

Under no circumstance should course or teaching assistants be given 100 percent responsibility for the grading of assignments. This is a task that must be equitably distributed. The final grade must be assigned by the faculty instructor.

Faculty should not expect nor ask their assistants to perform any duty unrelated to the course itself.

Course and teaching assistants should be expected to work approximately 15 hours per week in the fulfillment of their duties.

Laboratory Teaching Assistant

Laboratory teaching assistantships should provide a mutually beneficial apprenticeship between faculty and students. Assistants should help professors in the teaching of laboratory sessions but not necessarily provide assistance in all course responsibilities. As a laboratory teaching assistant, graduate students should be expected to:

- Attend all lectures as well as weekly discussions with the instructor about the upcoming week's laboratory
- Lead laboratory instruction
- Grade lab reports, quizzes, and lab practice exams
- Conduct review sessions on laboratory materials
- Participate in the construction of course exams and in their proctoring
- Assemble and reproduce course handouts and exams
- Meet with students outside the classroom to offer comments on their work. Regular and reasonable office hours should be announced in class, listed on syllabi, or posted on the office door.
- In conjunction with the course instructor, share in the grading responsibilities. The assignment of the final course grade belongs to the instructor and not the assistants.

Instructors employing laboratory teaching assistants should be expected to:

- Mentor their laboratory teaching assistants
- Discuss, set, and monitor pedagogical goals with their laboratory teaching assistants
- Share in the assignment of the final course grade.

Though laboratory teaching assistants are expected to grade all lab reports, quizzes, and practice exams, they should not be given 100 percent responsibility for the grading of assignments. This is a task that must be equitably distributed.

Faculty should not expect nor ask their assistants to perform any duty unrelated to the course itself.

Laboratory Teaching Assistants are compensated according to the total number of hours they work during a quarter. Laboratory teaching assistants who receive the full stipend of \$3,000 per quarter should be expected to work approximately 15 hours per week. If the stipend amount is \$2,182, they should be expected to work 12 hours per week; \$1,800, 10 hours per week; \$1,418, 8 hours per week; \$1,090, 6 hours per week; \$709, 4 hours per week.

Social Sciences Core Intern

Internships in Social Sciences College Core courses are provided to graduate students as part of an apprenticeship relation with a faculty

member. The goal of the internship is to prepare graduate students to eventually serve as independent instructors for these courses and to hone their skills as future college and university teachers. Interns should help professors in the teaching enterprise but not necessarily provide assistance in all course responsibilities. Every Social Sciences Core course is assigned an intern.

Interns should be expected to:

- Attend all class meetings
- Meet with class instructor to discuss teaching plan and pedagogical strategies
- Prepare for and lead one or two class sessions under the supervision of the instructor
- Arrange for and run audio-visual equipment
- Respond to CHALK postings and assignments
- Review and provide preliminary grades for half of all papers
- Attend course staff meeting if applicable

In relation to their Social Sciences Core intern, instructors should be expected to:

- Mentor their Core intern
- Discuss, set, and monitor pedagogical goals with their intern
- Supervise, calibrate, and generally lead the grading of course assignments and exams
- Assign the final course grade

Social Sciences Core Interns should reasonably be expected to work approximately 15 hours per week.

Humanities Writing Intern

Humanities Writing Internships in College Core courses are provided to graduate students as part of an apprenticeship relation with a faculty member. The goal of the internship is to prepare graduate students to eventually serve as independent instructors for these courses and to hone their skills as future college and university teachers. Interns should help professors in the teaching enterprise but not necessarily provide assistance in all course responsibilities. Writing Interns exist only in the Humanities Core courses.

Interns should be expected to:

- Attend all class meetings
- Prepare for and lead three writing workshops
- Review and provide preliminary grades for half of all papers and drafts
- Every writing course in the Humanities core enrolls up to 20 students. Writing interns are responsible for working with the students in the writing tutorials.

- Writing interns are expected to be available to meet with students outside the classroom for individual consultation
- Attend course staff meeting if applicable

In relation to their Humanities Writing intern, instructors should be expected to:

- Mentor their intern
- Discuss, set, and monitor pedagogical goals with their intern
- Supervise, calibrate, and generally lead the grading of course assignments and exams
- Assign the final course grade.

Humanities Writing Interns should reasonably be expected to work approximately 15 hours per week in the fulfillment of their duties.

Language Department Lector

Lectors in language courses are conversation leaders. Lectors should be expected to:

- Attend semi-regular meetings with the instructor to discuss lesson plans, quizzes, and exams designed for the course
- Meet with up to three small groups of student for seven weeks each quarter to repeat the lessons designed for the sessions
- Conduct oral exams for the course and help with cultural and/or conversational practice activities. Five hours per week for nine weeks of the quarter (beginning on week two of each quarter and ending on the tenth or eleventh week, depending on the final exam schedule) should be devoted to oral exams and conversation practice.
- With the goal of sharing pedagogical tools and teaching strategies, lectors should be expected to perform one or two peer observations per quarter and in turn to have their classroom performance observed by the course instructor and their peers.

Language Department lectors should be expected to work approximately 15 hours per week in the fulfillment of their duties.

Language Department Drill Instructor

Language drill instructors provide students with auxiliary language teaching mainly in the form of conversation. A language drill instructor's responsibilities should be:

- In coordination with the language course instructor, to conduct exercises in conversation, vocabulary quizzes, and any other activities that will engage student conversation in the language of instruction
- To actively steer conversation so that students at all levels feel comfortable participating

- To correct egregious grammatical mistakes as they occur
- To conduct oral exams and report grades on these exams as well as on vocabulary quizzes and to record attendance for the course instructor
- Drill instructors are not expected to introduce new grammatical material nor are they routinely expected to attend course lectures. However, they must remain in frequent contact with the instructor.

Language department drill instructors should be expected to work approximately 7-10 hours per week in the fulfillment of their duties.

Grader

Graders are occasionally employed by a few departments to help instructors grade assignments and exams in courses with large enrollments. Graders are expected to:

- Meet with the instructor to understand the material to be graded
- Provide preliminary grades to the class instructor
- Graders should not be expected to attend classes or to have any contact with students

We recommend that graders be paid \$20 for every student whose assignments they provisionally grade or, if more appropriate, \$1,500 per quarter.

Visual Arts Department Studio Assistant

Professors and instructors in the Visual Arts department routinely employ assistants to prepare materials for classes, to assist in the supervision of class projects and assignments. Each instructor usually defines the assistant's duties.

It should be the responsibility of the course instructor to articulate clearly an assistant's duties when that person is contracted. Studio assistants should not be expected to teach, grade, hold office hours, or supervise course content.

Studio assistants should be expected to work approximately 7-10 hours per week in the fulfillment of their duties.

2. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The University of Chicago has no formal procedures to resolve grievances that may stem from graduate student teaching activities. We recommend that official grievance procedures be established. Graduate students should be explicitly told by the University's administration that if they experience any difficulties or problems, there are several ways to resolve them, and these

avenues of resolution should be clearly identified. Official grievance procedures should include the processes described below.

- The first and easiest way to resolve conflict is for the graduate student simply to approach the course instructor through a formal appointment to discuss the problem as soon as possible. Ideally graduate students should not wait for weeks or months before they raise the issue. If the complaint is about duties or workload expectations, many times a simple conversation with the instructor will immediately resolve the issue.
- There is a significant power differential between instructors and graduate students. Often students feel intimidated by a face-to-face discussion with an instructor over a perceived problem or grievance. Depending on the level of intimidation, on the fear the student feels about a possible confrontation, and on the level of confidentiality a student feels necessary to avoid any possible retaliation for the complaint, the student has several options.
 - Every graduate department at the University of Chicago has a director of graduate studies in whom the student can trust in the resolution of conflicts over teaching duties and responsibilities. The director of graduate studies may resolve the problem by acting as an intermediary between the student and instructor. If the student feels unsatisfied with this procedure, with the possible solution proposed by the director of graduate studies, or deems the director of graduate studies to have a conflict of interest on the matter, the student should go directly to the department's chair. Depending on the severity of the problem, the chair may also want to consult with the divisional dean and the deputy provost for graduate education. Students teaching in the College core sequences as interns should first address their concerns to the chair of the course, and if the grievance is not resolved there, then to the master of the collegiate division, and finally the dean of the College.
 - The University of Chicago has an Office of the Ombudsperson. The ombudsperson and an assistant ombudsperson are there to help all students, including graduate students with grievances that may arise from their teaching duties. Students who come to the ombudsperson with a complaint are asked to first discuss the issue with the instructor. If the student does not know how to broach the complaint with the instructor, the ombudsperson can either mediate a meeting between the two parties or coach the student through role-playing to facilitate the conversation. If a formal grievance is registered with the Office of the Ombudsperson, the role of the staff in the office is to remain neutral and to collect the necessary information from all parties involved in the dispute. Given the

nature of information gathering, the Office of the Ombudsperson guarantees privacy but not confidentiality. Once the campus ombudsperson collects all the pertinent information about the grievance, the case should be referred to the deputy provost for graduate education for resolution.

- When department chairs, the lead professors for core courses, the masters of the collegiate divisions, or the dean of the College receive complaints about particular instructors, we recommend that those incidents be reported to the deputy provost for graduate education who should keep track of these in order to observe trends and particularly problematic instructors.

Once the University establishes official grievance procedures, we recommend they be publicized widely so that every graduate student teacher is made fully aware of them. Students should also be told about the Office of the Ombudsperson and about the services it provides.

3. UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

The University has policies about unlawful harassment and sexual assault, which are available online.¹ We recommend that every graduate student and professor be provided with a copy of each of these brochures. We further urge there to be an informational session on these topics as part of the orientation every new graduate student receives so that any student who experiences unlawful harassment or sexual assault has a clear understanding on how to resolve these issues. Every publication geared to graduate students, departmental directors of graduate studies, and faculty, should also regularly announce University policies and procedures for the resolution of unlawful harassment and sexual assault.

4. OTHER ISSUES

During the course of our fact-finding, we learned that one department does not employ undergraduate preceptors as most Social Sciences and Humanities departments do to advise students undertaking the research and writing of a B.A. essay. Despite the fact that the graduate students in this department are only compensated for their laboratory work, some professors also expect them to advise undergraduates writing B.A. essays without compensation. We could not ascertain how extensive this practice was. We recommend that the deputy provost for graduate education look into this matter, and if appropriate, appoint a committee to recommend solutions to the problem.

¹ <http://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/university/index.shtml#unlawful>
http://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/university/index.shtml#sex_assault