Teaching Assistantships in the UNM Biology Dept.

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Teaching Assistantship

- Teaching Assistants (TAs) are key to the Biology Dept. Curriculum
  - The “Great Connectors”
  - Hands on experience
  - Positive Role Models

- TA Eligibility:
  - Enrolled in 6 credit hours towards your degree
  - Maintain a 3.0 GPA
  - Not on probation
  - Within the time limit for completion of the degree
    - Masters – 2 years guaranteed assistantship support
    - PhD – 5 years guaranteed assistantship support

- Biology Dept. Compensates TA with:
  - Stipend
  - Health Insurance (if have contract is 0.25 FTE or more)
  - Tuition for grads on guaranteed support
Assistantship Responsibilities

- This is a paid job with responsibilities that must be met for continued support and future consideration
  - Assistantships are assigned for 18 weeks of work
    - Begins 1 week before first day of class
      - Fall 2013: Aug 15
    - Ends on the last day of finals
      - Fall 2013: Dec 13
  - Average 20 hours a week
    - This is a salary based position and you are paid for the job, not the hours. Some weeks may be more than 20 hrs. and some less.

- Each instructor will have their own specific expectations for their TA(s)
Assistantship Responsibilities cont.

• Weekly TA Meetings with instructor
  – Learn week’s material, discuss ideas, provide constructive feedback

• Grading
  – Promptly grade & return assignments and quizzes (1 week)
  – Some TAs grade lecture exams

• Lecture Exam Proctoring

• Attend Lectures
  – All core classes (Bio 201-204) require TA attendance in lecture
  – Other lecture classes encourage TA attendance

• Office Hours – 1 hour per section per week
  – Be where you say you will be, the entire time
  – Think about your office hours schedule
    • Don’t schedule during lecture
    • Set up variable times
    • Accept appointments
Assistantship Responsibilities cont.

• Absences:
  – Maximum one per contract!
  – You must notify your instructor ASAP
    • Do not wait until the last minute
  – You are responsible for finding coverage
    • Remember: TA KARMA! Compensate whomever covers for you by covering for them, paying them or trading.

• Emergency
  – Notify Instructor and Biology Main office immediately (Cast 167; 277-3411)
Teaching Resources

• Text Books and Lab Materials are provided by instructor as needed

• If you need help teaching:
  – Work with instructor
  – Sit in on experienced TA’s lab

• UNM class: Informatics 583 – Graduate Teaching I
  Fall Classes: INFO 583-1(43835) Fridays 2-3pm
  INFO 583-2(43836) Fridays 3-5pm
  International Students

• Office of Support for Effective Teaching (OSET)
  277-2229
  http://www.unm.edu/~oset/
  – Many 1 afternoon mini classes – VERY USEFUL!!
Ground Rules

- **BE ON TIME FOR EVERYTHING!**
  - This means 5 min early
  - Return graded work promptly (1 week)
  - Meet expected deadlines

- **No Food or Drinks in labs (applies to ALL!)**

- Class is responsible for clean up

- TA’s DO NOT cancel classes

- Meet for the full scheduled class time

- Be sensitive to the needs of UNM’s non-traditional students

- Use UNM email only
Tricks of the Trade

• Not just about teaching Biology
  – Brush up on your Math, Stats and Writing

• Be helpful and accessible, but firm and hold students accountable
  – Theodore Roosevelt: Speak softly and carry a big stick!
  – Set your class tone the 1st day

• Be a positive role model
  – Handwriting
  – Prepare, Prepare, Prepare

• This assignment is what you make it:
  – Enthusiasm & Energy are contagious
  – Be creative – They will remember!!
Last but not least!!

• Remember: We really do want our students to succeed!!