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### UTA Semester Reflection

This semester my main goal as a UTA was to decipher whether or not I enjoy working in a teaching environment. I am interested in being a teacher one day and I thought this program would help get experience working with students. Because of this, I tried to continually reflect throughout the semester on what went well and what was difficult. My biggest takeaways from the program this semester are lessons on confidence, time management and advocacy.

When initially applying to the program, I thought I was applying to Math 100. I thought this would be a great opportunity to work with students on subject matter I feel very confident with. Upon interviewing and being asked to help with Calculus II, I felt qualified enough but very nervous. I went into the semester thinking that because I didn't know calculus like the back of my hand, I couldn't be helpful to students. This semester I learned a lot about healthy failure in the strive towards growth. Quite often I felt that because I couldn't answer complicated questions, I therefore was not worthy of being a teaching assistant. This is not the case. I have learned that being a teacher does not mean knowing everything all of the time, but rather being willing to help as much as possible, admitting what you don't know and striving to eventually find answers. As I became more confident in my abilities, the rest of the semester became more fun.

The second skill I learned is that no job can be taken for granted. On weeks that I was very busy with school, my teaching assistant duties always fell to the bottom of my list. This made hosting office hours and helping in class very stressful because I did not aptly prepare to help with the material. Even though the UTA program is designed to be a low stress job for students, getting the most out of the program means preparing as one would in a professional

work environment. The program has so much to offer in terms of learning to be a teacher.

Although I was able to learn about grading, holding office hours and being a tutor, I wish I had put in more effort to learn how to give a lecture and be a helpful figure in the classroom rather than a distant figure outside of the classroom. This type of learning requires much time management.

The final lesson I learned and the most important I believe is advocacy. Although much of being a UTA is about administrative duties, the program is a great way to step into a leadership role. The biggest takeaway from the semester is the huge disconnect between students and teachers. Many teachers I encountered were under the impression that students are looking for an easy A, always prone to procrastination and overall juvenile in the academic world. On the other hand, many students report being insanely confused in lectures while also attempting to juggle insane amounts of coursework, and therefore appear to be efficiency oriented machines. I have learned this semester that being a UTA is about being an advocate between student and teacher. I really enjoyed talking with my mentor about where students were struggling as well as talking with students about where they felt the lectures were confusing and homework unreasonable. Working with both the teacher and the students in this context was my favorite part of being a UTA overall.