

James Lee
UTA Program
MATH 491
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Reflection for 2022 Fall UTA Program

My name is James Lee, currently a sophomore CS and Mathematics student at the University of Arizona. This was my first semester in the Undergraduate Teaching Assistant (UTA) Program as a teaching assistant (TA) for MATH 223: Multivariable Calculus (Vector Calculus).

I was tasked with the usual responsibilities as a TA for a math class: I had to grade the written homework every week, and hold review sessions twice a week for an hour each. I also created a Discord for the students to ask me questions regarding the homework directly if they needed to. For one of the review sessions, I had to prepare short review guides consisting of a couple questions on the material covered that week. On top of this, I had my mandatory duties as part of the UTA program, which were participating in the weekly seminar on Tuesdays for an hour and tutoring for two hours a week at the Math Tutoring Lab building.

I have done a bit of tutoring during the summer, mainly highschool students, which definitely helped me prepare for tutoring, although not as many people I expected came during my hours. I also had a couple embarrassing moments when I couldn't always answer a question, resorting to a quick google search. However, I learned how important confidence is when you are the one helping someone. I found using visual representations the best way to communicate what I'm thinking to the students, as I often have a hard time describing my thoughts into words.

Also, my mentor did not require me to attend the classes. I had to be only in class only once throughout the entire semester for an online review class. Because of this, I think my experience was a bit more lax than I first expected.

Grading the homeworks was not the most entertaining job in the world. Not to complain, as I do this myself, but the handwriting was sometimes hard to read, and the answers weren't always the same even if it was correct, often because the fraction was simplified enough or the answer was in a decimal.

Overall, I thought this was a unique experience, so thank you to the UTA program for giving me this opportunity. In all honesty, the experience didn't really affect my view of math as a subject, but it gave me a perspective of what it's like to be the "teacher" instead of the student. I would definitely recommend this program to others, especially if you want to know more about the role of an educator in mathematics.