Supraja Gurajala's Teaching Observations by Chris Lanz, Spring, 2020

I have observed two sessions of CIS 201 Computer Science I and six of Machine Learning.

Mastery of Material

It is at every moment abundantly clear that she knows whereof she speaks. In CIS 201 she goes well beyond a mere presentation of facts by discussions that help students grasp underlying principles. In Machine Learning, while she has notes, it is clear that she doesn't really need them. Additional evidence of mastery is her ability to answer the more advanced questions asked by the 2 faculty who are "sitting in" the course for the whole semester.

Organization and Presentation

In both courses she has extensive prepared materials, including slides, and in Machine Learning, programming examples using a standard tool for the subject. She announces the topics to be covered at the beginnings of lectures, and successfully gets through the specified material: this bespeaks clear and realistic planning for each lecture. CIS 201 is in some ways simpler to organize, but is at the same time more difficult to teach, because students in that course are absolute beginners: Dr. Gurajala handles the different populations in appropriately different ways. There is no flavor of improvisation - discussions are organized. Finally, there is never any question about what is required in terms of assignments in either course.

Interactions with Students

Class sessions move along continuously, but at every turn Dr. Gurajala asks questions of the class, and gives opportunity for students to request clarification. There are no social complications, no inappropriate judgemental attitudes, and no egoism. Machine Learning proceeds with good humor and continuous participation by attendees. Students in CIS 201 are typically somewhat stressed by the unfamiliarity and oddness of the material, and Dr. Gurajala adds nothing to this anxiety.