

# **Summary of Individual PFs Fall 2012 TAPDP Feedback**

**Weiwei Chen and Sarah Hernandez**

53 TAs filled out the evaluation form.

Question summaries (averages presented are out of 6 possible, with Strongly Agree being 6 and Strongly Disagree being 1; in question 4, 6=Excellent and 1 = Very Poor); comments are listed when provided.

## **Overall TAPDP Results**

**3.1 The Pedagogical Fellow (PF) was well-prepared. (5.88)**

**3.3 The PF helped me to understand the range of responsibilities I might have as a Teaching Assistant (TA). (5.60)**

**3.5 The PF helped me to have a better understanding of UCI undergraduates. (5.19)**

**3.7 The PF provided me with ideas for engaging students in the learning process. (5.73)**

**3.9 The PF engaged me in activities that I can use in my own teaching. (5.64)**

**3.11 The PF provided me with resources to which I could refer students in need, such as the Counseling Center, the Learning & Academic Resources Center (LARC), etc. (5.64)**

**3.13 The PF provided me with information and/or skills for dealing with issues that might arise during office hours. (5.55)**

**3.15 The PF provided me with information and/or skills for responding effectively and appropriately to students' work. (5.37)**

**3.17 The PF impressed on me the importance of professionalism. (5.51)**

**3.19 The PF provided opportunities for me to get to know my fellow graduate students. (5.45)**

**3.21 The PF helped me to understand that learning to teach effectively is an on-going process. (5.46)**

**3.23 The PF provided me with information & resources for how I can continue my professional development in teaching, such as the TLTC. (5.61)**

**3.25 I feel that future new TAs would benefit from participating in this program. (5.51)**

**4. From the perspective of a new graduate student who has never been a TA at UCI before, overall, how would you rate the training program your PF provided? (5.42)**

## **Your Individual Results**

### **3.1 The Pedagogical Fellow (PF) was well-prepared. (5.77)**

- They made a lot of effort. They were very well-prepared and so knowledgeable. We really appreciate them!
- Weiwei demonstrated great organization skills. Each lesson was clearly outlined and had a nice conclusion. Her presentation was a great example of how to lead an engaging class.
- Sarah and Weiwei clearly put a lot of time and dedication into this event. I was very impressed and at least a little surprised.
- Too many handouts. Its excessive as I didn't have enough time to read.
- The PFs were prepared for Plan B when EEE system was not functioning due to server error. This is commendable.
- The contents are well organized. The event is not boring as various activities are prepared in the middle.
- Great slides, 4 speaking skills.
- The training was extremely organized and the two PF's did a fantastic job tag-teaming to keep materials in order.
- The fellows were great about staying on target and on time, but none of the activities felt too rushed. I appreciated the summary slides both before and after the workshops that detailed what each workshop was going to promote.
- Very good job both of them. You can tell there is a lot of work to prepare the sessions. Excellent.
- They had all the paper material well organized.
- The amount of papers handed out is a serious concern. It seems as if we could have electronic copies of these papers for reference later. There seems to be little consideration of what to print and what not to print, which turns into a large waste of paper. Go GREEN!
- They were very well-prepared for every single workshop. There were almost no pauses, and they both seemed very knowledgeable about everything. They also did a good job keeping us on schedule.
- Is this a question? I guess you are not suppose to direct the answers in survey!
- Sarah Hernandez thought she is teaching a first grader, If this program thought her to be like this, then this is a failure and waste of tax payers money
- All the activities went smoothly, with a group as big as we had, that must have required a lot of prep
- They have done a very good job. Thanks their hard work.
- Weiwei and Sarah were well-prepared with ample handouts. Each taught in a style that stimulated class discussion and participation, helping to demonstrate first-hand the goals of the course.

### **3.3 The PF helped me to understand the range of responsibilities I might have as a Teaching Assistant (TA). (5.45)**

- Gave a nice handout outlining responsibilities and showed us references/resources. I still am a little unsure of what a discussion session looks like though (never had a discussion session or TA in undergrad)
- I appreciated having hard copy handouts of all of the information and activities covered in class so as to have a better reference to the many responsibilities.

- Good chance to know what the available resources and techniques for TAs are.
- They both have a lot of experience they passed along.
- I liked how they addressed problems and difficulties that we are likely to face as a TA. They used an active learning activity that allowed all the students to learn from literally all the other students. I thoroughly appreciated the way they taught this, because I gained viewpoints that I otherwise would not have been exposed to.
- the workshops were useless for engineering students when they are finishing up their degree, one of the workshop were to google a questions and finding the answer, I am wondering what was the point of the workshop? Teaching us how to use google???
- I have learned much about TA

### **3.5 The PF helped me to have a better understanding of UCI undergraduates. (5.94)**

- Gave complete list of demographics, but it might help to know what kind of questions to anticipate (i.e. if from experience, what are students looking for in a TA...a semi-professor or a tutor?)
- We did not address the UCI students except for demographics, not if they tend to prefer any specific ways of teaching.
- Already been an undergrad at uci
- Demographic data are provided, which is good.
- Surprised and enlightened by the demographic statistics
- This didn't seem to be large focus of the training.
- I think the demographics helped me to realize I will be dealing with many people who are different than me, but I think that experience is going to be the real teacher in that situation.
- which workshop was exactly designed on that?!!
- Finding out the different types ways people learn definitely helped me understand undergrads as well as myself
- I begin to know how to communicate with undergraduate.

### **3.7 The PF provided me with ideas for engaging students in the learning process. (5.62)**

- Weiwei did an 6 job in providing and illustrating fun ideas for student involvement and engagement
- Emphasis on active learning and the microteaching simulated the classroom environment well.
- Active learning is emphasized
- Really thought the group work was helpful. Many of the ideas were useful and I would employ them in class.
- The PF's excelled at this piece!
- I think it would have been fun and I would have learned more if we could have done some activities like role-playing where we act out different scenarios we may face as a TA. Then we could see how our peers would react to it and discuss the ways to handle the situation.
- Very good on this regard
- I especially appreciated how we were forced to come up with a lesson plan and then teach a mini-class. That will be useful in preparing me for TA activities more than I expected.
- This was absolutely awesome. I have kept the handouts, and am already beginning to use them in my tutoring help. They gave good suggestions on how to incorporate active learning into engineering courses, which at first glance would seem difficult. I LOVED THIS. It has changed my perspective on the type of classroom a teacher can create, and made me aware of accommodating different types of learning, or enhancing learning in general.
- They shared some excellent tools in a very effective way
- none of the method that they thought, were applicable in the 50 min, disscusion.

- They worked in the active learning techniques specifically for engineering courses
- The active learning impresses me very much.

### **3.9 The PF engaged me in activities that I can use in my own teaching. (5.45)**

- All their techniques were effective.
- In some calculation/project heavy classes, esp if they are large, it is hard imagining using some of the activities, although nevertheless it is good to have them at hand
- It was engaging and fun-- leading me to believe that these techniques could make my class engaging and fun.
- Many creative ideas were given, and all were very practical. In addition, if there was a question of feasibility, the PF's were able to provide alternative/modified activities.
- minute cards, muddiest point are definitely activities that I will consider in any discussions I lead. I think I would have liked hearing more personal experiences and how the TA's handled certain situations or got themselves prepared to take on a class, however, not just general teaching methods
- It is a little bit difficult to implement some teaching techniques for a class that is project based.
- I feel writing and carrying out the lesson plan was the most engaging.
- like playing with the balloon at the age of 33?
- I have learned several ways to teach in class.

### **3.11 The PF provided me with resources to which I could refer students in need, such as the Counseling Center, the Learning & Academic Resources Center (LARC), etc. (5.54)**

- Already knew some
- The scavenger hunt was a great way to get this across.
- I liked that we did an online search for this section. I enabled us to not only become familiar with the types of services available, but also know where to find such resources.
- undergraduate students are very smarter than what these workshops are designed and think of them
- I have been introduced many source in UCI

### **3.13 The PF provided me with information and/or skills for dealing with issues that might arise during office hours. (5.38)**

- I wish more practical situations would have been addressed: ie how far to help students with assignments during office hours (i.e. solve out problem for them if they are really stuck). Are there school-provided tutoring services?
- Everything was touched upon, but we did not spend as much time on the rarer (but also more potentially awkward/embarrassing/personal) issues. I guess just we'll just leave it at Weiwei's "Be friendly but professional!" and let common sense run its course.
- I did not know how to deal with students who have mental/personal issues before, but now i know i just take them to the place who can take care of them :)
- I think it would have been fun and I would have learned more if we could have done some activities like role-playing where we act out different scenarios we may face as a TA. Then we could see how our peers would react to it and discuss the ways to handle the situation.
- The situation boards were very useful for getting us to think about the situations before they arise.
- The PF taught us many situation which we may meet in office hours.

**3.15 The PF provided me with information and/or skills for responding effectively and appropriately to students' work. (5.17)**

- It would have been nice to see how the PF would have assigned points/made a rubric for the sample grading
- This came in the form of explaining TA's roles. Well done.
- I still feel like grading or coming up with my own rubric is going to be a challenging and intimidating.
- I think we could have spent a little more time on this.
- Some of the practiced techniques are harder to implement without explaining importance. i.e. group work seems to be worthless if TA doesn't guide metacognition and peer instruction. These would really help TA's direct conversation if they knew the importance of these concepts.
- This workshop could have been a little more in depth. Maybe, we could have spent more time going over our group exercise of grading papers.
- Gave some great suggestions for developing a rubric, organizing an SOP, and attempting to grade fairly. I appreciated this.
- I have learned how to deal with reader job.

**3.17 The PF impressed on me the importance of professionalism. (5.26)**

- Weiwei did an excellent job of being friendly and accessible while being professional and maintaining classroom authority. She treated us with respect, which made us WANT to respect her.
- This was brought up several times, and was also demonstrated by the PF's themselves.
- Both PF's were themselves professional, and required professionalism from the students. They facilitated a great balance between professional and learning that I'd like to emulate.
- like how they treated us in this workshop? was that being professional? I hope this requirement becomes an option for the future PHD students since it was only waste of 2 valuable days of research
- definitely emphasized that this was a job and we needed to act accordingly
- Especially the microteaching, it is so good.

**3.19 The PF provided opportunities for me to get to know my fellow graduate students. (5.28)**

- Great job in getting us to move around and meet other people.
- The whole thing was a rather exhausting affair, somewhat akin to trying to sprint a marathon, but with more coffee and reading, and I think most of us were too tired and busy to schmooze. With that said, I was able to briefly meet a few people from outside the bubble that is my lab and was glad for the chance. One of them gave me a sugary treat when I started falling asleep uncontrollably towards the end of the first day, a gesture that can only be repaid in blood.
- Good ice breakers
- The group works and energizers really helped.
- Ice-breakers and energizers were a great strategy to do accomplish this as well as give participants a quick break from the training.
- Could there have been some sort of activity with all the TA's, not just those in our school?
- We had an icebreaker, but more importantly, students were organized in groups of 4 by virtue of the classroom layout, which enabled us to get to know our group well. They also had activities where we switched up groups.
- at 5th year, I know all the fellow graduate students in my department
- The training was very interactive so we did a lot of group activities
- It is very useful.

**3.21 The PF helped me to understand that learning to teach effectively is an on-going process. (5.27)**

- They both gave personal examples of their own growth as a TA.
- Weiwei talked about the changes he noticed in her TA feedback over a span of several semesters/years, which hit home that you can always learn to teach effectively.
- they didn't have to teach us this, we already know. There is no point for 2 day workshop to state the obvious.

**3.23 The PF provided me with information & resources for how I can continue my professional development in teaching, such as the TLTC. (5.49)**

- The TLTC website is a bit hard to navigate
- if this was an example of TLTC workshop, I would never ever go there!! I learned what not to do in my sessions
- I have known how to ask help from TLTC

**3.25 I feel that future new TAs would benefit from participating in this program. (5.28)**

- I feel that although the information presented was interesting (i.e. why to incorporate active learning), not enough time was spent addressing practical issues/skills (i.e. how to properly write on blackboard/address students, what physical resources are available...i.e. index cards, where to print, if books are free)
- Definitely wish I had known about this the 1st two times I TA'ed. Would have saved me a lot of unnecessary work and trouble from a few particularly disruptive and/or manipulative students.
- Maybe the format can be changed a little bit. Conducting such intense workshop with so many TAs is definitely a problem. I would suggest do such things separately, e.g., having a session with only ~20 TAs. This will definitely increase the work of the fellows.
- Should be required for TAs and professors!
- This was a great program with a lot of fantastic techniques, practice, and resource information.
- Some information given is a bit common sense.
- I feel that the training helps but I also feel that is way too long.
- Very, very strongly suggest that future TA's take this program. Although it was a large quantity of material in a short period of time, each activity and general teaching subject was recorded in some form or another on handouts. I plan to go over my handouts again and continue to learn, and refresh what I have learned.
- I am going on my 4th year of being a TA and I wish I had done this earlier.
- It is so useful and helpful
- The program was a good introduction to working as a TA. Some of the material, however, should be discussed in further depth, and/or given more time, to allow for a better understanding.

**4. From the perspective of a new graduate student who has never been a TA at UCI before, overall, how would you rate the training program your PF provided? (5.17)**

**Additional Comments:**

- Use less paper! Its bad for the environment!
- It would be great if we could have a chance to talk to the TAs after microteaching to ask questions in a small group discussion.
- Could go on forever about how awesome/helpful/cool Sarah and Weiwei are but I only get 15000 characters so I'll trust everyone gets the idea.

- Although useful, TA training is long and exhausting (as it is even more so for the leaders), and also take away from research time. If it is possible, divide it into more days. Thank you for the hard work!
  - Excellent job! The training was done well such that it wasn't intimidating to participate and a lot of information was given in a relatively short amount of time.
  - From the perspective of someone who has not acted as a TA before, I feel that the training was very informative as far as resources and learning styles, but I would have liked to hear more criticisms on the micro-teaching workshop or had more time spent on being in front of a class and hearing tips on how to manage that experience. I would have preferred to spend 1.5 days on that alone and be offered the chance to use learning styles and activities that I came up or from a worksheet to demonstrate on a smaller group so as to have hands-on learning for myself and other graduates. I know that the TLTC is available, but if I had a TA ship starting this week, I would have no idea how to actually lead that session. I believe the PF's did everything that they were supposed to, but I believe the overall decided structure of the training was less useful in what I was hoping to experience than what I actually did. If at all possible, it would be great to offer the in-class training to smaller groups so that they could practice.
  - It was hard to remember all the different teaching styles, and we never really discussed how to create a lesson plan to incorporate all the different types of learners (which I think would be very hard/impractical to do for each lesson considering the time limits of discussion and lab sections).
  - It was a wonderful experience. I had an opportunity to learn the about active learning techniques.
  - During Mini-teaching workshop, I think grouping students with different topics (rather than grouping the same topic together) will make the teaching experience much more realistic. It is a very different feeling talking to a class which already knows the material vs. teaching a class which is there to learn.
  - I am in the last quarter of my study as a PhD. I have been Teaching Assistant 4 times, this last summer I was the Teaching Associate (Primary instructor) of a junior level course. If this workshop was mandated for me 3 or 4 years ago when I started the program, it would have been very useful, but at this point, the whole process was too long and time consuming. Most of the material was not new to me. It may be a 4 idea to remove the requirement of this workshop for grad students who already have done TA more than 2 times. As alternative, it might be possible to categorize TAs into those with experience, and those without and somehow address their particular needs.
  - Thanks for two excellent TAPDP facilitators. I was thoroughly impressed, and wished I had this type of introductory training in my previous graduate program.
  - Two concerns that I would like to share: \* For a first time TA this workshop is extremely helpful and I really recommend it to any new TA. But it would be a pain for someone who TA-ed 6 times before and had a experience of being the instructor few times, to benefit from the workshop. \* As a TA, I see two different sides that you should deal with them; Students, which is the most important part and this workshop provided a lot of information on this side. And second part of the experience is to deal with the faculties and instructors which is also very important in my opinion. It would be very useful to include a workshop that focuses on the interaction between the TA and the instructor.
- Thank you.

- The workshop was very condensed. Too much pressure during the workshop days. Use less papers, Instead refer to soft copies (online files, etc.)
- Weiwei and Sarah were a pleasure to be around, they made the training very engaging and fun. They motivated me to apply to be a PF.
- They have done a very good job, thanks.