

## UC Santa Cruz Cal Teach Learning Assistant Program Guidelines Winter 2020

The Learning Assistant (LA) Program involves collaboration between the UC Santa Cruz Cal Teach program and the host STEM department/instructors. It is designed to enhance the academic experience for both the undergraduates in sections that utilize LAs and for the LAs themselves.

### **Benefits to Learning Assistants:**

- Gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter
- Explore how individuals learn and thus improve their own study skills
- Develop and improve their ability to communicate complex ideas and concepts
- Practice questioning and listening skills that can be translated to their future careers
- Learn to facilitate positive and productive group interactions
- Acquire validated experience for post-graduate applications, including PhD programs, medical schools, and teaching credential programs
- Benefit from the mentorship of their assigned TA/instructor and from the opportunity to work with other LAs

### **Benefits to STEM Departments:**

Improve learning outcomes associated with active learning environments:

- Enrolled students will benefit from the extra help and encouragement that undergraduate LAs provide. LAs are closer to them in age and experience and can more directly relate to their struggles.
- TAs will improve their mentoring skills through interaction with their assigned LAs.
- LAs gain confidence in their field of study by developing a deeper understanding of the subject matter. They will develop communication and interpersonal skills which will support their success in future careers.

### **Responsibilities of the Learning Assistant program partners:**

#### *Cal Teach Responsibilities*

- Cal Teach offers *PBS 101: Pedagogy for Learning Assistants* which develops skills needed to be successful Learning Assistants. The two-unit seminar course covers current educational theory and pedagogy relevant to the LA experience, including issues of metacognition and research on facilitating learning in an academic environment. Students learn questioning techniques that they will put into practice during their internship as LAs.
- Cal Teach offers *PBS 102: Advanced Pedagogy for Learning Assistants* which develops mentoring skills for continuing LAs.

### *Department Responsibilities*

- Instructors provide academic training for the LAs (generally one hour a week in a team setting) in which LAs will have the opportunity to review pertinent course material.
- Instructors provide access to course material, power points, problem sets, discussion materials and answer keys several days before topics will be covered.

### *Learning Assistant Responsibilities*

- Attend and actively participate in
  - all LA training including PBS 101 and instructional team meetings
  - assigned discussion, lab, and/or lecture sections
- Follow all academic and instructional guidelines as outlined by their departmental and Cal Teach instructors
- Act professionally regarding academic honesty, confidentiality, and peer interactions

### **Important Reminders**

- Learning Assistants are undergraduates. They will **not** have primary responsibility for a small-group section, nor will they be responsible for grading assigned work, holding office hours, or any other designated TA duty.
- LAs are interning with the TA and instructor as part of their academic learning experience. They must always work under the supervision of a TA and/or instructor.
- The LA program is designed to be an active internship where the LAs have the opportunity to interact with students by facilitating small group instruction.
- LAs may be given the opportunity to lead whole group discussions as long as the TA or instructor is present and actively available for guidance.

### **Contact information:**

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