

Summary: In-service

This was the first official week for newly funded graduate students. On Wednesday there was a department orientation. On Thursday there was a faculty meeting and meetings with course coordinators. Finally on Friday there was a 2 hour training session.

Friday's session started with introductions. Then students met by assignment (grading, recitation, or teacher of record) to talk about concerns related to their first day of class and what they hoped to get out of the class. The following concerns were expressed

- Graders: How many student papers will we have to grade? Workload?
- Recitation: Quiz format? Number of questions?
- Instructors: What questions will students ask?

We listed the topics for each session on the board and indicated during which session the concern would be addressed. At this time we covered the course syllabus (<http://www.math.unm.edu/mctp/gstts/2014/>) including information about expectations and grades.

Next we covered in detail the sections of the TA training manual. Here some of the first day concerns were addressed. We gave some general first day advice (know location of classroom, demonstrated how access class list from LoboWeb, put name and office hours on the board, etc.). Finally we concluded with assignment specific advice.

- Graders: Get in touch with your instructor.
- Recitation: Get in touch with your instructor. Decide if you will give a weekly quiz. Go over prerequisite material. Consider giving an assessment quiz. Come prepared with lots of examples and problems related to 1st day material and prerequisite material.
- Instructors: Go over the syllabus. Be prepared with plenty of examples from first section. Prepare written lecture notes.

At the end of the session we had an optional tour of the building followed by a social gathering at Kelly's Brew Pub.

Reflections

We were pleased that the department hosted an orientation this year. This orientation covered basic Math/Stat department topics and allowed us to shorten the agenda for Friday's meeting. We had hoped the orientation would include a tour. Since it did not, we added it on to the end of our session. It was really good that we made it option because very few people were interested.

It is great that we have such a diverse group of students, both in background and assignment. They will have a variety of experiences to share during future discussions. Very few concerns about the first day or expectations for the course were shared. We hope that as the semester progresses, students will be more comfortable participating in group discussions.

We shared lots of pertinent information regarding expectations for TAs and advice for the first day. However, the format was a bit dry. We would like to make the course more discussion based in future sessions.