The Teaching Assistant as an Instructor

Each Teaching Assistant (TA) at Western Illinois University should strive for excellence in classroom instruction, in the laboratory, or in any other educational situation. This goal requires constant evaluation, experimentation, and innovation as professional responsibilities. Education is a dynamic process in which change must be orderly. Each TA should recognize that appropriate academic bodies must approve of changes in established regulations and policies. A TA must recognize the mutually accepted procedures within the University, including those stated in the following:

- Existing Illinois Board of Trustees
- Bylaws and regulations
- University catalogs
- University handbooks
- Policies established by the departments, the colleges, and the university

A TA is not free, unilaterally and willfully, to suspend, alter, or abrogate those practices and policies pertaining to the educational operations of the institution. Within these constraints, he/she is entitled to freedom in the classroom in developing and discussing, according to his/her area of competence, the subjects which he/she is assigned. Each TA has the right to criticize and seek alteration of those regulations and policies by duly constituted procedures.

Each TA is expected to teach his/her assigned courses in a manner consistent with the University calendar, the course content, the evaluation procedures, and the course credit as approved by the department and other appropriate faculty bodies. If a TA member is unable, for whatever reason, to meet his/her teaching obligations, he/she should notify the department chairperson in order for appropriate arrangements can be made to enable the student to meet the course requirements. If the TA is unable or unwilling to do so, his department or college must assume this responsibility.

A TA as an instructor must scrupulously avoid using his/her position to indoctrinate students or in any way to abridge their academic freedom. One must not attempt overtly or covertly to coerce students into accepting or feigning positions similar to his/hers. A TA must not urge his/her students to coerce others or to commit acts of violence against the person or property of others. A TA must not promote or participate in activities which disrupt the normal operations of this institution.

Since University policy calls for the evaluation of a student’s performance, every TA has the responsibility to report to the University his/her evaluation of the work of each student in his/her classes. Evaluation of academic achievement is a difficult task. A TA should have appropriate academic criteria in each of his/her courses and determine the extent to which each student has met those criteria.

This assessment must be on an individual student basis. The arbitrary assignment of a grade or the rigid a priori determination that a percentage of a class shall receive a specific grade are two examples of grading procedures which are equally inimical to academic responsibility and to the rights of the procedures that accurately reflect the academic achievement of the student. The TA should keep adequate records since students may seek redress against arbitrary or capricious evaluations through designated University procedures.

View the official University Policy Manual at: http://www.wiu.edu/provost/facultypolicies/
Teaching Assistant Orientation

Union Capitol Room · August 19th