

News from the Center for Research on Teaching Excellence

Special Graduate Student Edition!

This is a special edition of the CRTE Newsletter, one specifically for graduate students. This issue we are forgoing detailed updates on WASC accreditation to summarize for you the many ways the Center for Research on Teaching Excellence strives to improve the professional development of UC Merced's graduate students. Whether you have been a long-time active participant of our workshops, or a recent arrival to campus, we invite you to read about each service we provide, and we request that you click one of the links to a survey about your experiences with the Center at UC Merced. Each section of the survey has one to three questions; you can complete the entire survey, or select only the parts that pertain to your experience this year. The feedback we receive from you will help determine the directions the CRTE will take in the fall to assist you and your colleagues. Your opinion makes a difference. Thank you!

[Take me to the survey!](#)



Focusing on Career Development

How can the Center help you prepare for the job market, as well as the classroom? *Teaching Matters* featured workshops on building effective teaching portfolios. Co-sponsored by Career Services, this series covered writing a teaching philosophy statement, creating curriculum vitae, writing syllabi, and structuring an e-portfolio. Considering the variety of resources offered by other universities, we want to know more about the types of services grad students seek at our campus. Visit the University of Washington's "[Re-envisioning the Ph.D](#)" site and [Yale University Graduate Career Services](#) site, which provide links to information for job seekers. Think about how Yale and other universities, such as University of Pennsylvania, stage "[dissertation boot camps](#)" to help grad student complete their programs. Then, let us know the type of information you would like the Center to provide in the future by answering related questions in the survey. Also, if you missed UC Merced's teaching portfolio series and would like to see a session repeated, get a few of your fellow grad students to agree to a convenient time, and contact Karen Dunn-Haley at kdunn-haley@ucmerced.edu. Follow-up consultations are also available.

University of
California, Merced

Center for Research on Teaching Excellence

Office: 167 Kolligian Library
Phone: (209) 228-7950
Fax: (209) 228-4128
General email:
crte@ucmerced.edu

Robert Ochsner,
Director of CRTE
rochsner@ucmerced.edu
(209) 228-4171

Juana Dumagan,
Administrative Assistant
jdumagan@ucmerced.edu
(209) 228-7950

For information about
resources and upcoming
events, please visit:

<http://crte.ucmerced.edu>

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Teaching and Technology

One of the key functions of the Center is to educate and empower graduate students about how to use various instructional technologies effectively. Through the Teaching and Technology Series, the Center introduces TAs to current and emerging instructional technologies that have direct pedagogical implications. For example, at the beginning of every semester the Center offers several CROPS workshops, geared toward helping graduate instructors leverage the many tools available for effective course delivery. More recently, a workshop on PowerPoint provided participants with important practical and pedagogical considerations on effective and ineffective use of such a tool for discussion sections. Through these workshops and individual consultations, the Center seeks to help graduate students become savvy technology users with a keen focus on learning. In order for us to better serve you in this aspect of classroom instruction, please complete the related questions of the survey. Should you have any questions about the Teaching and Technology Series, please contact Mike Truong via email (mtruong@ucmerced.edu) or phone (209-217-7249).

Pedagogy

Are you interested in a teaching position after graduate school? Have you considered the skills, knowledge, and experience you will need to teach more effectively and land a position?

Consider the kinds of skills and knowledge your colleagues at other institutions are gaining related to [course design, including backward design for learning outcomes, modes of online instruction, strategies for leading discussion sections and lectures, use of active learning in the classroom, promotion of self-directed learning](#), and more. Through its [Teaching Matters](#) and [Teaching and Technology](#) workshops series, our Center is offering an ever-growing array of similar opportunities, including, for example, workshops focused on active learning, scaffolding assignments to promote learning, strategies to enhance classroom discussion, and using [backwards design in teaching](#). Visit our [website](#) to learn more.

Finally, reflect on your own teaching goals and career aspirations. Are there areas you would like to develop? Help the Center refine its offerings in support of your instructional goals by completing this brief survey.

[*Take me to the survey!*](#)

TA Orientation

Each fall, during the week before classes begin, the Center offers a day-long orientation for graduate students who are or who will be teaching assistants. A key objective of that orientation is to introduce TAs to the challenges of teaching UC Merced undergraduates, including its large cohort of first-generation students (over 50% of all freshmen) who are often academically under-prepared and likely to struggle in their courses. In national studies of academic achievement, only 24% of these first-generation freshmen complete a baccalaureate, the lowest rate of persistence to degree completion of any student cohort.

To assist TAs in supporting these at-risk students, the Center orientation provides general advice about effective teaching strategies that TAs might incorporate in their classes and labs. We would appreciate your input about what the Center might offer to new and experienced TAs in order to better prepare them for the challenges of teaching UC Merced freshmen. Your response to the survey that is part of this edition of the CRTE Newsletter will help us plan that additional support.



The English Language Institute (ELI)

The English Language Institute (ELI) at UC Merced is dedicated to assisting non-native students and scholars on campus. In addition to providing language assessment for incoming international TAs, the program offers regular workshops and co-curricular activities for students and scholars on F1 and J1 visas. Whether or not you have attended a pronunciation or grammar workshop, or participated in the Conversation Partner Program, if you are an international graduate student, the ELI wants to hear from you. Please complete the short ELI section of the survey to let us know how to serve you better. International *and local* graduate students and scholars are encouraged to contact Belinda Braunstein at bbraunstein@ucmerced.edu to participate in the Conversation Partner Program.

[*Take me to the survey!*](#)

SATAL: Students Assessing Teaching and Learning

Would you like to gain a better sense of the student experience in your courses? Students Assessing Teaching and Learning (SATAL) is an assessment support program offered by the Center for all instructional faculty, including graduate students who are teaching. The SATAL program offers students trained in data collection and reporting to gather pertinent personalized feedback on your classes. How does the program work? Invite a SATAL student to collect confidential data on your classroom activities and courses. Since the data collection is carried out by peers, students reflect on their courses in a non-threatening manner. Some of the assessment options we offer are class interviewing, class observation, class videotaping, focus groups, mid-course evaluations, and exit/entrance surveys. The distribution of the SATAL reports will be at the discretion of the requesting instructor. For more information contact Adriana Signorini by email asignorini@ucmerced.edu x4766.



Upcoming Teaching & Technology Workshop

E-mail Management for Teachers

Wednesday, April 14, 1-2pm, in COB 322

Are you inundated with e-mail? Do you occasionally overlook or lose track of important messages? This workshop provides useful strategies and tips for organizing and managing that onslaught of information on your computer.

FIPSE Grants and Mentoring

Are you advanced to candidacy and seeking more opportunities to gain classroom research experience and publishing opportunities? The CRTE was recently awarded a Department of Education grant to develop a teaching guidebook, authored by advanced graduate students in any discipline. This guidebook will include brief single-subject teaching approaches that address the needs of first-generation college students. Consistent with the aims of the grant, graduate students will gain advanced pedagogical training with increased preparation as future faculty.

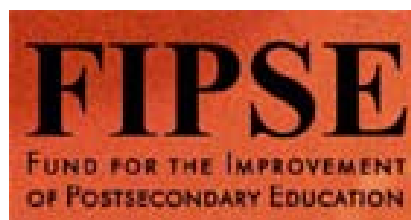
If you are interested in applying for this teaching fellowship in the upcoming summer or fall (a 25% CRTE Graduate Student Research position), please visit the UC Merced employment site. The application window for summer and fall appointments closes on Friday, April 16. All graduate students are welcome to apply; however, preference is given to those who are at the All But Dissertation (A.B.D.) stage and those who have completed the CRTE Instructional Intern program. Any questions about this project should be directed to Dr. Anne Zanzucchi (Guidebook Coordinator, azanzucchi@ucmerced.edu, x4173). For more information, please visit Guidebook Project under the grants section of the CRTE website <http://crte.ucmerced.edu/grants-and-fellowships>.

Instructional Internships

The CRTE encourages all TAs to complete an instructional internship in using “best practices” of effective teaching that promote successful student learning. Any graduate student who has a current or pending appointment as a TA can complete an internship by attending or facilitating at least five Center workshops. There is no time limit on when these workshops must be completed, but we would encourage Interns to attend all five workshops within one academic year.

Interns are eligible to receive a one-time only payment of \$250. They also qualify for two levels of certification (see <http://crte.ucmerced.edu/node/6> for more details). As the Center considers options for expanding this internship program, we want to address the preferences of new, prospective and experienced TAs. Your response to the survey that is part of this edition of the CRTE Newsletter will help us do that.

[*Take me to the survey!*](#)



Who We Are at the CRTE

Director: Robert Ochsner, Ph.D. rochsner@ucmerced.edu

Instructional Technology: Mike Truong, Ph.D. mtruong@ucmerced.edu

Assessment and FIPSE: Anne Zanzucchi, Ph.D. azanzucchi@ucmerced.edu

English Language Institute: Belinda Braunstein, M.A. bbraunstein@ucmerced.edu

Faculty Development and Assessment: Laura Martin, Ph.D. lmartin@ucmerced.edu

Faculty Development and Accreditation: Karen Dunn-Haley, Ph.D. kdunn-haley@ucmerced.edu

Student Assessing Teaching and Learning: Adriana Signorini, M.A. asignorini@ucmerced.edu