New
GRADUATE
TEACHING
ASSISTANT
ORIENTATION

August 10
2021

WELCOME TO UT
Welcome GTAs!

“Thank you for your service.” That is a phrase most often used to demonstrate appreciation to members of the armed forces, first responders, and more recently essential workers. But, I believe this phrase applies equally to those who are teachers. The efforts made by teachers directly impact the lives of their students, and the work that you will do as a GTA has the potential to make a positive impact on undergraduate students at the University of Tennessee. So in advance of the fall 2021 semester, let me be the first to say “Thank you for your service.”

You may be new to teaching, or you may have previous experiences in the classroom. Regardless, fall 2021 is going to be a new opportunity for you to expand your skills as a communicator, listener, and learner. Good teaching requires the ability to receive information from your students as well as the ability to relay information to your students. There are many UT offices committed to helping you do your job well. Throughout this orientation, you will be hearing from some of these offices. There is much to absorb as you transition into your role as a GTA, but faculty members in your department and staff in offices you’ll hear from today stand ready to support you.

The speakers at the New GTA Orientation provide important insights from offices across campus. Teaching and student success are collaborative ventures that require cooperation across units. In this program, you will find valuable links to resources on campus. Familiarize yourself with these resources so that you can be positioned to be the best possible teacher for our students. If you need help with your teaching duties, be willing to ask for support. We want you to be a successful teacher because that will translate into success for your students.

The success of our students is critical to our university’s mission, and you are key members of our teaching force. Often, undergraduate students feel more comfortable reaching out to GTAs than to other members of our instructional faculty. Get to know your students, even if in an online environment, and let them know you are there to help them. You could be a difference maker in the success of a student.

Wishing you all the best this fall and in the years ahead,

Dixie L. Thompson, PhD
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
AGENDA

August 10, 2021

8:30–9:00 am  Welcome & Introduction
   Dixie L. Thompson, Dean of the Graduate School
   Hunter Hammock, Graduate Student Senate President

9:10–9:50 am  Creating an Effective Teaching Practice
   Robert Jacobsen, Teaching & Learning Innovation

10:00–10:20 am  Title IX: Your Role as a Mandatory Reporter
   Laura Bryant, Office of Title IX

10:30–11:10 am  Student Success Center
   Amber Williams, Division of Student Success

11:10 am–11:40 am  Intermission

11:40 am–12:00 pm  Disability Related Accommodations
   David Ndiaye, Student Disability Services

12:10–12:50 pm  UT Libraries
   Anna Sandelli, UT Libraries

1:00–1:20 pm  Academic Integrity & Classroom Behavior
   Shawn McComas and Bryan Blackwell, Student Conduct & Community Standards

1:30–1:50 pm  Policy, Privacy, & Instructor Responsibility
   Jennifer Hardy, Registrar Office

2:00–2:15 pm  Closing Remarks
Creating an Effective Teaching Practice
Robert Jacobsen, Teaching and Learning Innovation
9:10-9:50am
This presentation focuses on evidence-based teaching strategies that you can incorporate into your teaching practice. Evidence-based teaching strategies are supported by classroom research and show substantial improvements in student learning. These strategies emphasize connecting with students to promote engagement, modeling behavior to achieve learning outcomes, and assessing for student learning and improvement. Programs and resources from Teaching & Learning Innovation are available for those wanting to advance their teaching skills.

Title IX: Your Role as a Mandatory Reporter
Laura Bryant, Office of Title IX
10:00-10:20am
As a GTA at UT, you are federally mandated to report Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Dating, and Domestic Violence, and Stalking (Prohibited Conduct) to the Office of Title IX. This presentation will explain what it means to be a mandatory reporter and what steps GTA’s must take to fulfill their obligations under the policy.

Student Success Center
Amber Williams, Division of Student Success
10:30-11:10am
Vice Provost Amber Williams will share how UT enhances the undergraduate experience through developing the potential of each student scholar through a positive psychology framing. Participants will gain an overview of innovative initiatives like the Vol First Year Experience, Vol Study Center, Vol Success Teams, UT Success Academy, and Vols Start Back.

Disability Related Accommodations
David Ndiaye
11:40am-12:00pm
The number of students with disabilities who request accommodations continues to grow at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. This presentation explains the accommodation request process and the role of faculty in the provision of accommodations for qualifying students with disabilities.

UT Libraries
Anna Sandelli, UT Libraries
12:10-12:50pm
This presentation will provide an overview of UT Libraries’ resources, services, and spaces to support Graduate Teaching Assistants. Topics will include library instruction and consultation opportunities; approaches to incorporating collections, electronic resources, and librarian-created teaching tools; and highlights of library spaces to foster teaching, learning, and innovation. The session will provide resources for in-person, online, and hybrid teaching environments.

Academic Integrity & Classroom Behavior
Shaun McComas & Bryan Blackwell, Student Conduct & Community Standards
1:00-1:20pm
The Academic Integrity and Classroom Behavior presentation by Student Conduct & Community Standards will introduce participants to academic and behavioral issues and Code of Conduct processes at UT. Topics include academic integrity, frequent academic misconduct issues and trends, classroom behavior issues and trends, and campus resources. Detailed Conduct process information will be provided.

Policy, Privacy, and Instructor Responsibility
Jennifer Hardy, Office of the Registrar
1:30-1:50pm
This presentation will focus on key academic policies and deadlines that instructors must know when teaching a course. FERPA, CPOS, attendance tracking, and grading will be covered.
**Bryan Blackwell**  
**Student Conduct & Community Standards**

Bryan has a passion for serving, assisting, and working alongside students as they navigate UT successfully. Bryan joined the Student Conduct & Community Standards team in March of 2021 and serves as a coordinator. In this role, he provides oversight to graduate assistants and adjudicates academic and student misconduct with a functional area of athletics. Bryan is committed to fostering a culture of accountability and integrity for all students’ interpersonal growth and development. Bryan’s mantra is all about helping students overcome barriers as they matriculate into well-rounded adults embracing new challenges in the world.

**Laura Bryant**  
**Office of Title IX**

Laura Bryant, Ph.D., MSSW serves as the Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Prevention, Training, and Evaluation in the Office of Title IX. In her role, Laura oversees the university’s comprehensive approach to preventing sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. Laura has worked at the university for eleven years, and before serving in her current role, Laura was the Director of the Center for Health Education & Wellness in which she directed student prevention efforts, care, and support via 974-HELP, and threat assessment. Currently, Laura serves as a member of the Commission for LGBT People and serves on the College of Social Work Advisory Board where she is also an adjunct professor.

**Jennifer Hardy**  
**Office of the Registrar**

Jennifer Hardy is the Deputy Registrar and Residency Coordinator at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Her work history includes administrative experience at public and private schools and at small and large institutions. Jennifer has a bachelor’s degree in Classics from the University of Cincinnati and a master’s degree in Classics from Vanderbilt University. She has been at UT since 2006.

**Robert Jacobsen**  
**Teaching and Learning Innovation**

Dr. Robert Jacobsen wears many hats around the university. As a lecturer in the Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences, Jacobsen teaches introductory geology and geoscience education. Through his course on planetary geology, students learn to use Earth’s geology to understand the geology of our solar system. Jacobsen also works with Teaching & Learning Innovation as the UT Institutional Leader of the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, & Learning. In this role, Jacobsen leads programs for graduate students and postdocs focused on evidence-based teaching practices in STEM. Through these programs, participants become more authentic and effective instructors. Finally, Jacobsen is the Assistant Director of the Tennessee Space Grant Consortium. The consortium exists to support STEM learning opportunities at UT and in the community. Each year, Jacobsen coordinates funding for undergraduate research and community partnerships focused on K-12 education.

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Amber Williams
Division of Student Success

Vice Provost Amber Williams leads UT’s Division of Student Success and develops programming and initiatives that enhance students’ strengths in alignment with their goals and dreams. During her first year at UT, Vice Provost Williams initiated the New Vol Experience, a reimagined six-week experience to transition new Vols to UT. UT also launched Vol Success Teams, where each new student was assigned a three-person network to help navigate their UT experience. And finally, the Vol First-Year Experience is a transformative academic opportunity for first-year students to engage with faculty, staff, and peers. Students who participated in these programs reported higher academic and social belongingness levels and are more comfortable utilizing UT resources.

Shaun McComas
Student Conduct & Community Standards

Shaun McComas has served students at UT in Student Conduct & Community Standards since 2016. Shaun’s primary focus has been working with faculty, staff, and students to address behavioral and academic misconduct on campus while maintaining responsibility for office assessment, evaluation, and administration of Maxient’s student conduct database software. Prior to joining the office, Shaun worked as a counselor for a local alcohol and drug treatment facility providing treatment and counseling as part of a multidisciplinary team to individuals with substance use disorders. Shaun’s professional experiences paired with his Social Work education allow him to approach Student Conduct with compassion, understanding, and attention to environmental factors to promote student development.

Anna Sandelli
UT Libraries

Anna Sandelli is Associate Professor and Head of Teaching and Learning Programs at UT Libraries, where she oversees a department focused on information literacy, online learning, and student success. Her teaching has included first-year and transfer student undergraduate instruction, as well as graduate student instruction for the School of Information Sciences, and workshops for a variety of student and faculty audiences, in in-person and online environments. Anna has served on a number of university-wide and professional committees involving experiential learning, inclusive teaching, and transfer student initiatives. She recently served as a faculty leader for the inclusive teaching track of UT’s 2021 Course Redesign Institute and has been recognized as an American Library Association Emerging Leader. She has published and presented on transfer student initiatives, using ethnography to explore student-created learning communities, and the development of a library certificate focused on cultural competency and inclusive teaching.

David Ndiaye
Student Disability Services

David Ndiaye serves as the director of Student Disability Services at UT. In this role, David oversees the overall function of the department and collaborates with other units to ensure equitable access to the university’s experience for students with disabilities. He began his career in the disability field as a graduate assistant, coordinating testing accommodations for registered students with disabilities. After spending some time in the private sector, he joined Student Disability Services at UT in 2008.

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The Graduate Student Senate (GSS) represents the interests of all graduate and professional students at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The GSS provides the opinion of the graduate student body to administrators and works towards improving the graduate and professional student experience on campus. In addition, the GSS has partnerships with various organizations and departments on campus to provide valuable programming for graduate and professional students. This includes, but is not limited to Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week (GPSAW), collaborations with the Center for Career Development, GSS Travel Awards which provide funds to graduate and professional students traveling to conferences to present original work, and the GSS Awards Ceremony and Breakfast which recognizes outstanding graduate and professional students as well as the faculty and staff who support them.

The GSS participates in the establishment of policies and regulations relating to the graduate experience and makes recommendations to the appropriate decision-making officers. The voting membership of the GSS consists of representatives from each academic graduate program or department. In addition to internal strategic planning and legislative committees, many GSS Senators serve as representatives on various university-wide committees including the Graduate Council.
The GPSPD team has worked to create a framework for professional development that can help guide graduate and professional students to opportunities that can help them achieve their career goals.

**Communication & Presentation Skills**
Writing and speaking to the public and within your field are critical for professional success.

- Learn to develop professional oral and written communications, including public speaking, professional correspondence, presentation development and delivery, and visual representation of data.
- Learn when and how to use social media for personal brand development and professional purposes.

**Career Development & Management**
Cultivate the skills to assess opportunities and take strategic risks.

- Build awareness of career options in your field and pathways to those careers.
- Learn personal goal-setting and implementation
- Develop relevant skills, experience, and competencies toward that career goal.
- Develop a professional identity

**Professional Socialization & Professionalism**
Learn skills and competencies to become a professional in research and applied settings.

- Learn collaboration across disciplines and creative problem-solving to develop projects and effectively lead or contribute to teams.
- Identify and cultivate the transferable skills taught within the graduate career that are expected of a high level, working professional.

**Networking & Relationship Building**
Professional opportunities such as internships, grants, and collaborations are often acquired through professional networks.

- Learn to establish and cultivate relationships with professionals and organizations in your field.

**Well-Being & Personal Development**
It is important to understand the demands of graduate life and professional life.

- Learn to manage the competing priorities of personal and professional life.
- Develop attention to work-life harmony, personal goals, and professional productivity.
Graduate Student Organizations
If you are looking to connect with other graduate students, there are many opportunities for you to get involved with a student organization at UT. Visit VOLink to find groups such as:

- The Multicultural Graduate Student Organization
- OUTGrads
- Latina/o/x Association of Graduate Students
- Women in STEM: Advancing Research, Readiness and Retention

plus many departmental student organizations!
These businesses have been great supporters of graduate education over the years and have provided gifts and prizes for our events, including this week’s Community Fair. We hope you’ll take the time to visit these local businesses and help support them just as they have done for us.

**Bush Brothers & Company (Baked Beans)**
**Chick-fil-A in Bearden**
**Knoxville Ice Bears**
**Kroger**
**NASCAR Speedpark Smoky Mountains**
**The Muse**
The 2021 New Graduate Student Orientation is hosted by the Graduate School in affiliation with the Graduate Student Senate and with special assistance from UT Conferences.

A special “thank you” to the 2021 Orientation Planning Committee:

**Dixie L. Thompson**  
Vice Provost and Dean

**Mohamed Al Sager**  
Graduate Student Senate Vice President

**Sara Bradberry**  
Assistant Dean and Director of Student Services

**Millie Cheatham**  
Coordinator & Office Manager

**Catherine Cox**  
Coordinator & Catalog Editor

**Hunter Hammock**  
Graduate Student Senate President

**Natalie Hassett**  
GRA - Dean’s Office

**Sean Q. Hendricks**  
Communications Manager

**Carly Porter**  
GRA - Communication & Recruitment

**Abby Sherman**  
Coordinator of Student Services