Undergraduate Teaching Assistants
COMP110's Real MVPs

Fall 2016

Spring 2017
COMP110's F16/S17 numbers at a glance...

- > 1,600 Students

- **12,813 one-on-one office hours appointments**

- > 2,700 digital messages / e-mails sent

- **67 UTAs**
  - 52 Fall 2017
  - 56 Spring 2017

- 208 Applications for 35 UTA team openings

- 4 Head UTAs

- 1 Instructor

*How did I get here?*
Rising Enrollments in COMP110

COMP110 Students

- Fall 2015: Aikat (300), Jordan (200)
- Spring 2016: Jordan (600)
- Fall 2016: Jordan (900)
Can we teach 945 students in a single semester more effectively than we taught 550?
We thought so, *if* we could...

1. Grow the WE in "can WE teach 945 students" proportionately
   • Large enough for *someone* on staff to know *every* student on a first name basis

2. *Increase* one-on-one contact and improve e-mail responsiveness
   • Hold Office Hours 50+ Hours a Week
   • Divide and Conquer E-mail for 24h Response Window

3. *Eliminate Anonymity*
   • Built student profile database software last summer
The Rise of UTAs in COMP110

Staffing and Students

Grad TA  UTA  Students (10s)
Gender Representation on the TA/UTA Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Spring 2016</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Spring 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
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</tbody>
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"Your Team"

• *Every student* in the class is assigned a pair of UTAs for the semester

• We assign teams in 2nd week based on student-UTA resonance
  • Gender Affinity
  • Major / Extra Curricular Interests
  • Diversity of Team Pair

• Team members are charged with knowing the names and faces of their students
  • Also keep an eye on performance in the course to surface concerns

• Students e-mail through our app which sends to their team members
  • CC's a mailing list for tracking / auditing purposes
  • Team replies all so we know it's handled

• Team members respond to ~2 e-mails per week and response time is typically well under 24h
UTA Open Office Hours

• Students enter a queue on-demand
  • To enter queue must state problem/question and how you’ve attempted to resolve independently

• UTAs call students in order
  • Median wait - < 5 minutes
  • Average wait - 9 minutes

• 7-20 minutes per session
  • Median - 12 minutes

• Sessions occur at 1:1 stations
  • Ikea bar chair + wall mount table + 3'x2' whiteboard = $70/station
UTA Open Office Hours

- 300 Weekly Hours of UTA Capacity

- Open 53 Hours / Week
  - 10a-8p Mon - Thu
  - 10a-6p Fri
  - 12p-5p Sun

- 75% of students visited office hours both F16/S17
  - Of these students, median is 7 visits / student
  - 12,813 total one-on-one sessions (so far)
"I was able to get individual help when I needed it"

COMP Department

COMP110

n=196  av.=4.51  md=5.00  dev.=0.84
n=1458  av.=4.22  md=4.00  dev.=0.93
2-way Feedback Data After Each Session

• UTAs rate students on:
  1. Preparedness
  2. Engaged and respectful
  3. Concern for course progress

• Students rate UTAs on:
  1. Welcoming and respectful
  2. Genuinely tried to help me learn
  3. Excellent UTA to work with

• Free response case notes

• Free response feedback
Time Allocation

375 Weekly Hours of UTA Capacity

80% UTA Office Hours - (300 hours)
10% Lecture Help
3% UTA Led Review Sessions
2% Video Team
2% Study Guide Team
3% Misc. (Writers Room, Website Help)
Student Success Database Software

• Profile has a **Current** Photo!

• Biographical Data - Pronouns, Major, Year, etc.

• Office Hours Session History
  • What did you work on?
  • Who have you met with?
  • Ratings / Feedback

• Communication History

• Future - additional / custom data sources.

Interested in using similar software in *your* courses?

This summer I'm aiming to build a version that other courses can use, too.

Videos

• Produced weekly by two sophomores on the team

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1vbF5WsZNY
Benefits of being a UTA

• It's not about the money (nor course credit for mentors)

• Builds confidence and competence

• Exposure to teaching and communicating fundamental ideas in your field of study

• Comradery of talented friends also passionate about your subject area

• Wonderful work to list on resumes

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kl3eTGGVGU
Key Advice

• Trust in your UTAs the same you would graduate TAs

• Build a pipeline - on-board great students straight out of your course

• Interview or require video in applications
  • "Hire for fire" - personality and passion as important as academic performance

• Schedule UTA office hours with 2+ UTAs for reliability and accountability
Questions?

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