PREPARING GRADUATE STUDENTS TO TEACH

A Guide to Programs That Improve Undergraduate Education and Develop Tomorrow's Faculty

Edited by Leo M. Lambert & Stacey Lane Tice ✧ Syracuse University

AAHE
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

THE TEACHING INITIATIVE

Preparing Graduate Students To Teach

A Guide to Programs That Improve Undergraduate Education and Develop Tomorrow's Faculty

From a comprehensive national survey of teaching assistant training programs and practices.

Edited by
Leo M. Lambert and Stacey Lane Tice
Syracuse University

Supported by
The Council of Graduate Schools
TIAA-CREF
The Pew Charitable Trusts

A Project of The AAHE Teaching Initiative
American Association for Higher Education

PREPARING GRADUATE STUDENTS TO TEACH
A Guide to Programs That Improve Undergraduate Education and Develop Tomorrow's Faculty
edited by Leo M. Lambert and Stacey Lane Tice, Syracuse University

A publication of AAHE's Teaching Initiative. For more about AAHE and the AAHE Teaching Initiative, see Appendix D.

Additional copies of this publication are available to AAHE members for $20.00 each ($22.00 each for nonmembers), including fourth class shipping and handling. Bulk discounts are available for orders of 10 copies or more. All orders under $50 must be prepaid by check, credit card, or money order; all orders over $50 must be prepaid or accompanied by institutional purchase order. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Order from:

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
One Dupont Circle, Suite 360
Washington, DC 20036-1110
ph 202/293-6440, fax 202/293-0073

Foreword

In the early 1980s, the number of international students entering our graduate schools jumped dramatically. As many of these students became teaching assistants (TAs), this circumstance was followed by another: a rising tide of complaints, from undergraduates and their parents, about being taught by TAs whose English was difficult to understand. Like athletes who can't read, TAs who can't speak English was a quality defect too obvious to be ignored. "TA training" found its way onto the agenda of the American university.

Today, a decade later, the criticism has broadened far beyond the English language proficiency of international students. Against a backdrop of cost increases double the rate of inflation, rising expectations for student achievement, and fierce competition for scarce resources, issues of faculty workload, productivity, commitment to teaching, and competence as teachers are on the university agenda as never before. The preparation and role of all TAs, once an issue at the margin of people's attention, is moving to center stage.

Happily, as the heat has been turning up, important work has been going forward, as well. Those responsible for TA training have moved far beyond the initial, limited agenda of assuring minimum standards for international students, and a biennial national conference has been established to share and foster progress in the broad area of TA training. The American Association for Higher Education and the Council of Graduate Schools have provided the national umbrella for this event; responsibility for organizing and hosting it has been taken on by campuses eager to advance the cause of TA preparation: the Ohio State University (1986), the University of Washington (1989), and the University of Texas at Austin (1991).

At the 1989 conference, there was much discussion of the need for a road map through the new terrain of TA training. How far have we come? Have conditions improved? Are there now effective models that others might follow? What are the barriers to further progress?

Characteristically, it was Leo Lambert, associate dean of the Graduate School at Syracuse University, who seized the day and made things happen. More than at any university we know, key administrators at Syracuse believe in the maxim that lasting innovation needs to be a cooperative effort . . . that only if a number of institutions pull together will the system change in ways that sustain local initiatives. As a leader of the initial TA-training movement, and chief architect of one of the most advanced programs of TA training in the country, it came naturally to Leo Lambert to "think nationally."

Shortly after the 1989 TA conference, Leo asked us whether we were interested in joining him in designing a survey of TA training and publishing the results? We certainly were — especially since Leo and his capable staff were willing to do the great bulk of the work.

We commend this study to the attention of all of you "out there" who care about the future professoriate and the quality of undergraduate education. And we thank Leo and his colleague Stacey Lane Tice at Syracuse for a wonderful initiative, creatively and selflessly undertaken, in the service of us all.

Russell Edgerton
President
American Association for Higher Education

Jules LaPidus
President
Council of Graduate Schools

Preface

> Since virtually all doctoral students, whether or not they enter the academic sector, will be engaged in not only the creation but the dissemination of knowledge, the skills acquired in learning how to teach will be fundamental to their future work. Yet in far too many programs, effective teachers are produced by happenstance rather than by design. Graduate students often teach too much but are not sufficiently assisted in becoming effective teachers; we find this both ironic and unacceptable.[1]

There has been considerable discussion of late about the erosion of public trust and confidence in the American system of higher education. One of the explanations frequently cited both in the popular press and by higher education insiders is the use (and abuse) of graduate teaching assistants for undergraduate instruction at major research universities. Traditionally, college and university faculty have been introduced to college teaching as teaching assistants by having their department chair thrust a textbook (and, if they were lucky, a syllabus) at them the day before classes began, with instructions to "stop by if you have any questions." Research universities also are often criticized for too frequently using inexperienced teaching assistants to teach introductory courses, denying undergraduates sufficient early interaction with experienced, senior scholars. Even more shocking to parents, trustees, and state legislators has been the practice of employing TAs who lack even the most basic level of English language proficiency to teach first- and second-year university students. These are poor practices indeed for institutions that exist to promote teaching and learning.

Rapidly Changing Practices

Happily, tremendous strides have been taken toward addressing these problems over the past five years. The National Survey of Teaching Assistant Training Programs and Practices (described in Chapter I) that is the basis for this publication reported that among responding institutions, a remarkable three fifths of TA programs based in a central university office (e.g., a center for teaching excellence) have begun *in just the past four years.* Not only are poor practices being corrected relatively quickly, but, more significantly, at a number of leading institutions preparation for teaching is becoming an integral aspect of graduate training, particularly at the Ph.D. level. This is a change of the first order and, I would argue, one of the most important phenomena in higher education in the last twenty years.

How has such change occurred so quickly? There are many reasons. At the most basic level, many states now mandate English language proficiency, and, in some instances, basic training in teaching for teaching assistants. But there are even more compelling explanations:

(1) Campus cultures at research universities across the United States have begun to change in response to varied stimuli, creating a more favorable context for the preparation of graduate students for teaching. The landmark report of Ernest Boyer *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* has refocused and revitalized discussions about the meaning of scholarship and the connectedness of the activities of discovery, integration, application, and teaching.[2] With support of Lilly Endowment, Inc., academic and professional societies such as the American Historical Society and the American Sociological Association are reexamining basic definitions of scholarly work and enhancing the status of teaching within the faculty rewards system.[3] Indeed, on my own campus our new chancellor, Kenneth Shaw, has proposed the reexamination of the faculty reward system, the institution of prestigious awards for excellence in teaching, increased integration of research and discovery with teaching, along with a host of other initiatives to create a new culture of a "student-centered research university."

(2) Three national conferences on the employment and training of teaching assistants have been hosted — by the Ohio State University (1986), the University of Washington (1989), and the University of Texas at Austin (1991). A fourth conference is planned for 1993, to be hosted by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. These conferences have brought together faculty from a variety of disciplines, instructional-development professionals, English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) specialists, and graduate school deans and have fostered important dialogues about how present practices might be improved.

(3) National associations such as the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) consistently have kept graduate student preparation for teaching on their agendas and have connected the topic with broader movements in teaching improvement. The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) has emphasized the obligation of graduate schools "to create an environment where graduate student teaching is valued and rewarded and where future faculty members may leave the institution well prepared for teaching."[4]

(4) The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), of the U.S. Department of Education, has funded more than a dozen important projects in the area over the past three years, fostering the development of exciting new approaches to preparing graduate students for college and university teaching careers. Other forward-thinking funders, such as The Pew Charitable Trusts, also have taken leadership roles in this regard.

The sum of these and other efforts is to send a clear signal that our traditional practices regarding teaching assistants must be replaced by new institutional commitments for reform. Much progress already has been made, but bold leadership will be required to advance the agenda through the 1990s.

Not incidentally, one indication of how far the "TA training" movement has come is that the term "training" itself is rapidly falling into disfavor with faculty and professionals in the field. To many, the term connotes one-shot orientation programs that provide TAs with a limited repertoire of skills. Today, leading programs have much higher goals: preparing the next generation of faculty for excellence in both research and teaching; forging an ethic of professional development that begins in the graduate student years and continues throughout professional

life; and contributing to changing campus cultures that place higher values (and rewards) on teaching excellence.

Naturally, increased attention to the preparation of graduate students for university teaching responsibilities raises a healthy degree of skepticism as well as tough questions: Will time-to-degree for the Ph.D. be lengthened further?[5] Will TAs do even more teaching than they do now (already too much, in some fields)? Does increased attention to teaching mean that the rigorous research emphasis of the doctorate will be threatened? These are questions my faculty colleagues and I have discussed as Syracuse, with support from FIPSE and The Pew Charitable Trusts, implements its "Future Professoriate Project." We are proceeding, believing that increased preparation for teaching can be incorporated into the most demanding and rigorous of research-oriented doctoral programs; that carefully selected faculty mentors are in the best position to prepare their apprentice colleagues to excel in multiple scholarly capacities; and that both undergraduate and graduate education at our institution will be enhanced by more serious attention to the preparation of graduate students as teachers.

The Purpose of This Volume

Our purpose with PREPARING GRADUATE STUDENTS TO TEACH is to describe and document the state of affairs in preparing graduate students for college and university teaching responsibilities. With so much happening on the national scene and with so many new programmatic efforts put in place just in the last few years, we and our colleagues at AAHE and CGS determined it was time to examine our present condition — to take stock — and to highlight programs taking promising new directions. To accomplish that goal, we conducted a NATIONAL SURVEY OF TEACHING ASSISTANT TRAINING PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES, with the sponsorship of AAHE, CGS, and TIAA-CREF, in cooperation with graduate deans across the United States. This volume is based on the results of that survey.

In Chapter I, Peter Syverson, of the Council of Graduate Schools, and Stacey Lane Tice, of Syracuse University, summarize the results of the survey and provide a helpful review of the centrality of the teaching assistantship in graduate education.

The publication's main two chapters are devoted to abstracts of programs with successful and creative approaches to preparing graduate students as teachers. When the survey results were in, we were overwhelmed by the number of good ideas and practices; we regret that all the good work under way in institutions and academic departments could not be featured. Chapter II profiles twenty-eight centralized programs based in a graduate school, center for teaching excellence, English as a Second Language program, or similar central university office. Chapter III profiles forty-four discipline-based programs in the biological sciences, chemistry, English and composition, foreign languages, mathematics, psychology, the social sciences, and speech communication. The disciplinary editors for Chapter III were selected on the basis of their national reputation in TA development in their field and, in some cases, their involvement in AAHE's Teaching Initiative.

As a part of the survey, respondents were invited to write a "ten-minute essay" about impediments to better TA-preparation practices and how they might be removed as we consider

new ways to prepare the professoriate of the future for teaching. The invitation elicited dozens of thoughtful, even passionate, responses from the field, which were woven into a wonderful essay by Pat Hutchings in Chapter IV.

Our intention in designing PREPARING GRADUATE STUDENTS TO TEACH was to foster idea sharing and interactions among faculty, professional staff, and graduate students who are involved (or who are about to become involved) in such work. Thus, in Chapter V, directories organized by program type and discipline contain essential contact information — the name, title, department, address, telephone and fax numbers, and electronic mail address for each program participant in the survey. More than 360 entries are included. Many of us in TA preparation have learned a great deal by trial and error over the years; it makes little sense for newcomers to start from scratch. Instead, we hope this publication initiates correspondence, telephone conversations, and site visits that will help all programs, both new and old, to become stronger and more sophisticated.

A Broader Vision

I recently was part of an extraordinary weekend mini-conference held at Syracuse University's Lubin House, in New York City, on the subject of becoming a college faculty member.[6] Some of us who gathered for the meeting were faculty or administrators experienced in designing and administering development programs (for TAs, senior graduate students about to embark on academic careers, and/or new faculty); others were higher education scholars who have studied and written about becoming an effective university teacher. Still others represented a foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, or an academic society.

It rapidly became clear to us that the typically eight to ten years that encompass graduate (usually doctoral) preparation and the first years as an assistant professor should be regarded as a continuum of professional preparation for teaching and that for each of its stages (e.g., new TA, experienced graduate student, new faculty member) institutions should have a program in place appropriate to that level. For example, at each stage faculty or graduate students should be assigned to teaching duties appropriate to that level; be provided with a teaching mentor; participate in professional-development seminars with peers; receive incentives and rewards for excellence; and, perhaps most basic, have regular opportunities to talk with colleagues, both inside and outside their discipline, about teaching.

This idea of a continuum of stages in preparing to teach was significant in that it helped each of us understand our role — as TA "developer" or new faculty "developer" or program funder or academic society officer — within a much larger framework. Further, we began to realize the potential power of articulating a vision much more comprehensive than "TA training" and "new faculty orientation" of how institutions should be preparing graduate students and faculty to teach at the college level.

The programs highlighted in PREPARING GRADUATE STUDENTS TO TEACH significantly contribute to our understanding of how professional preparation for teaching can begin during the graduate school years. The major challenge for those of us involved in TA-development work on our campuses is to understand our programs in light of the professional-development continuum, to begin

to plan and implement expanded programs that will build on the foundations we already have constructed, and to forge connections and professional alliances that will ensure a coherent and comprehensive system of preparing college and university faculty in the United States.

Leo M. Lambert
Syracuse University

Notes

1. Association of Graduate Schools, American Association of Universities, *Institutional Policies to Improve Doctoral Education: A Policy Statement* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Universities, November 1990).
2. E.L. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (Princeton, N.J.: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990).
3. This project is being directed by Robert M. Diamond, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Center for Instructional Development, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244; 315/443-4571.
4. Council of Graduate Schools, *Organization and Administration of Graduate Education: A Policy Statement* (Washington, D.C.: Council of Graduate Schools, Summer 1990).
5. See W. Bowen and N. Rudenstine's *In Pursuit of the Ph.D.* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992) for an excellent discussion of this topic.
6. Attendees also included Ann Austin, Michigan State University; Bob Boice, SUNY Stony Brook; Nancy Chism, The Ohio State University; Sarah Dinham, University of Arizona; Marty Finkelstein, New Jersey Institute for Collegiate Teaching and Learning; Valerie French, The American University; Jerry Gaff, Association of American Colleges; Rusty Garth, Council of Independent Colleges; Marne Helgesen, University of Illinois; Carla Howery, American Sociological Association; Brian Lekander, FIPSE; Bob Menges, Northwestern University; Jody Nyquist, University of Washington; Kathleen Parson, Macalester College; Marilla Svinicki, University of Texas; and Ellen Wert, The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Acknowledgments

This work could not have been possible without the efforts and support of many colleagues. We are especially grateful to Dr. Peggy Heim, senior research officer at TIAA-CREF, for both the funding and the encouragement she provided for our research. The higher education community deeply appreciates TIAA-CREF's longstanding support of research on higher education and the professoriate.

The support of The Pew Charitable Trusts — in particular Dr. Ellen Wert, program associate in education — is also acknowledged with gratitude. A grant from The Trusts has helped subsidize publication expenses and enabled AAHE to disseminate this book to key constituents in the higher education community.

We also are grateful to the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) and the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) for co-sponsoring our study. Under the stewardship of presidents Russell Edgerton and Jules LaPidus, AAHE and CGS have kept the issue of the preparation of graduate students for college teaching on the front burner for the past five years. Their leadership in this regard has been pivotal to the progress that has been achieved across the nation.

Pat Hutchings, director of The Teaching Initiative at AAHE, and Peter Syverson, director of information services at CGS, have been full partners in the study. Pat's ability to see the connections between the many issues related to teaching improvement and faculty development in higher education is extraordinary. Peter has a complete grasp of the issues affecting graduate education in the United States, and his advice on methodological concerns was invaluable.

We appreciate and value Bry Pollack's talents as the chief wordsmith and publications manager at AAHE. Bry is a prolific producer of high-quality work for AAHE, and we have come to rely heavily on her editorial judgment. Our thanks are also extended to Gail Hubbard, assistant editor, for her great work.

Without the talents and insights of our colleagues from across the nation, this project could have never come to completion; in fact, this volume is in many ways a celebration of *their* achievements. We are especially appreciative of the assistance of Nancy Chism, at the Ohio State University; Donald Wulff, at the University of Washington; and Janet Constantinides, at the University of Wyoming, in the early stages of our survey work. The contributions of our colleagues in editing the chapter on discipline-based teaching-assistant programs and practices was essential. In this capacity we acknowledge Clyde Herreid, at the State University of New York at Buffalo; Richard Quest, at the State University of New York at Binghamton; David Jolliffe, at the University of Illinois at Chicago; Susan Rava, at Washington University; Bettye Anne Case, at the Florida State University; John Philip Huneke at the Ohio State University; Victor Benassi,

at the University of New Hampshire; Phillip Saunders, at Indiana University; and Ann Staton, at the University of Washington.

Closer to home, we are grateful to Robert G. Jensen, dean of the Graduate School at Syracuse University, for his unflagging support of all of our endeavors, and especially for his leadership in making graduate student preparation for teaching a signature theme of graduate education at Syracuse. We have come to appreciate how rare it is to have a boss who is both a great colleague and friend and who sets a tone for experimentation, innovation, and making a difference in the lives of students.

We also owe a great debt to Hanna Waggoner, of the Center for Instructional Development, for her assistance in the editing of this volume. Seldom does one find editorial talent, a great sense of humor, and an amazing capacity for keen insight all in one person, but Hanna has all these qualities and more.

Despite the involvement of literally dozens of people in bringing this volume to completion, we remain responsible for its content and imperfections.

Finally, we're grateful to our families, our greatest sources of joy and inspiration. Much appreciation is due Laurie, Callie, and Mollie Lambert, and Craig and Megan Tice, for patiently sharing us with this project.

LML and SLT
August 1992

Table of Contents

CHAPTER I

The Critical Role of the Teaching Assistantship

by Peter D. Syverson
Director of Information Services, Council of Graduate Schools
and Stacey Lane Tice
Assistant to the Director of the TA Program, Syracuse University

Graduate students depend on a variety of sources of financial support to pay for tuition and living expenses, including fellowships; tuition scholarships; research assistantships; teaching assistantships; college work-study; student loans; and support from employment, spouse, and family. Over the six to ten years it typically takes them to earn a doctoral degree, students commonly use seven or eight of these different sources. Moreover, the sources used often vary by year of study. For example, a graduate student might begin with a fellowship or research assistantship, then have a teaching assistantship, and finish with a dissertation fellowship, all the while supplementing them with loans or income from employment.

The role of the teaching assistantship in this complex financial support matrix is central to understanding the importance of the TAship to graduate education. Drawing on a number of national data sources, we describe in this chapter the teaching assistantship's place in that matrix and conclude that across all disciplines, the teaching assistantship is the single most important source of graduate financial support that universities provide. In addition, we explore how the role of the TAship in this web of financial support sources has changed over the last two decades as the federal government's direct support of graduate students has waned.

Changing Environments

The National Research Council's Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) provides perhaps the most useful national data on the financial support of doctoral students. The SED questionnaire is filled out by graduate students at about the time they complete all requirements for the doctoral degree. In the survey, students are asked to indicate all of the financial sources they used to support their doctoral study. While the survey does not provide data on the *amount* of support received from each source, it does give us a sense of the *variety* of sources and the frequency at which they are used.

Displayed in Table 1 is a ranking of support sources. Not surprisingly, the most common support source was personal/spouse earnings, cited by 84 percent of all doctorate recipients. Most

Table 1. Principal Sources of Support in Graduate School Among 1990 Doctorate Recipients[1]

Source	Number of Recipients
Personal/Spouse Earnings	27,808 (84%)
Teaching Assistantship	16,305 (49%)
Research Assistantship	16,035 (48%)
Loans	11,106 (33%)
University[2]	8,703 (26%)
Family Support	8,062 (24%)
Federal[3]	3,792 (11%)
Other[4]	4,456 (13%)

1. Percentages are based only on known sources of support.
2. Includes university fellowships, college work-study, and other university sources.
3. Includes U.S. nationally competitive fellowships/traineeships, GI Bill funds, and other federal support.
4. Includes state government, foreign government, national nonfederal fellowships, and other unspecified sources.

Source: National Research Council, Survey of Earned Doctorates

Table 2. Frequency of Teaching Assistantships Among 1990 Doctorate Recipients, by Field[1]

Field	Total Doctorates	Number With TAships
Humanities	3,514	2,509 (71%)
Physical Sciences	5,418	3,852 (71%)
Social Sciences	5,536	3,103 (56%)
Professional Fields[2]	2,107	1,058 (50%)
Engineering	4,454	1,970 (44%)
Life Sciences	6,186	2,371 (38%)
Education	6,039	1,442 (24%)
Total	33,254	16,305 (49%)

1. Only doctorates with known sources of support are included.
2. Includes business and management, communications, public administration, social work, and theology.

Source: National Research Council, Survey of Earned Doctorates

graduate students work during the course of their doctoral study, and many pursue graduate degrees part-time while working full-time. Teaching assistantships, however, constitute the second most used source, at 49 percent. In other words, roughly one half of all doctorate recipients in 1990 reported having a teaching assistantship at some time during their graduate career. Nearly as many students received support from research assistantships, at 48 percent. One important difference between TAships and RAships, however, is that nearly all TAships are funded through the university budget, while roughly one half of all RAships are funded through federal research grants (National Research Council 1991, Table A-5, p. 70).

Data from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study, conducted every three years by the National Center for Education Statistics, further demonstrates the contribution of the TAship to graduate student finances. In the study, financial support data are collected from a nationally representative sample of graduate students. In 1990, the study found that the total

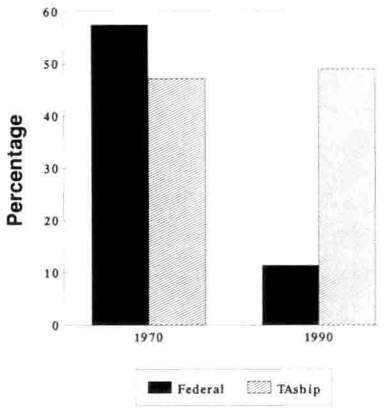
financial support package for graduate students averaged roughly $12,000. For students holding TAships, $6,600 of that package (55 percent) came from the teaching assistantship (U.S. Department of Education).

Not only is the teaching assistantship the chief source of support provided by universities, it is available to students across the graduate curriculum, as can be seen in Table 2.

The TAship takes on even greater importance in fields where other sources of support, such as research assistantships, are not frequently available. For example, humanities graduate students reported the following major sources of university-related support: teaching assistantship (71 percent), university fellowship (32 percent), and research assistantship (16 percent). In contrast, students in the physical sciences reported the same percentage for teaching assistantships (71 percent), but 76 percent reported holding research assistantships and 16 percent reported university fellowships (National Research Council 1991, Table A-5, p. 70).

Over the last two decades, the importance of university-based support, such as the teaching assistantship, has increased as federal support for graduate students has dramatically changed. Not only has federal support declined precipitously during this time, but it also has shifted emphasis, moving away from fellowships and toward research assistantships. In 1970, some 60,000 graduate students were supported on federal fellowships and traineeships from programs such as the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) Title IV, the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and NASA. The NDEA Title IV program supported graduate students in all fields, including the humanities. All of these programs were either eliminated or scaled back between 1970 and 1975 (Association of American Universities 1990, pp. 16-17). Figure 1 shows the result of that change in federal funding. In 1970, nearly 60 percent of doctorate recipients reported receiving direct federal support in the form of fellowships or traineeships; in 1990, that figure had dropped to 11 percent. Over the same period, the percentage of students reporting teaching assistantship support increased slightly, from 47 to 49 percent of all new doctorates. This shift in federal support away from the fellowship has dramatically increased the importance of the teaching assistantship as a support source for graduate students, especially in fields such as the humanities where research assistantships are not common (National Research Council 1991, Table A-5, p. 70; 1970, Table 3, p. 8).

Figure 1. Proportion of Doctorate Recipients Receiving Federal and Teaching Assistantship Support, 1970 and 1990



Source: National Research Council

National Survey of Teaching Assistant Training Programs and Practices

While such statistics demonstrate the importance of the teaching assistantship as a source of financial support for graduate students, the TAship has another, perhaps more critical role — that of fulfilling a variety of teaching and teaching-related functions in the university. To enhance both the teaching skills of the graduate students and the TA experience itself, many universities have instituted training programs for teaching assistants. Because TA-training programs are a rather recent phenomenon on the institutional landscape, very little has been known about them.[1] How many programs are there, and in what kinds of institutions? How many graduate TAs are involved in the programs? How do different types of programs (centralized, departmental) differ? What are the financial resources involved in TA training, and how are programs funded?

The National Survey of Teaching Assistant Training Programs and Practices, on which this volume is based, was designed to respond to the need for descriptive data on TA-training programs. The study consisted of three surveys. In spring 1991, the first survey was sent to deans of the 393 institutions that were current members of the Council of Graduate Schools[2] (see Appendix A for a sample Survey I and cover letter). That questionnaire requested baseline data on each institution's TA-training programs: the total number of TAs on the campus, the number of international TAs, and whether or not TA training is mandated. In addition, the questionnaire requested the names of the contact people involved in any centralized (all-university) training effort or in exemplary department-based TA-training programs.

Based on responses to the first survey, a second survey (Survey II) was sent to the individuals involved in those centralized training programs (see Appendix B) and a third survey (Survey III) to the individuals involved in those department-based programs (see Appendix C). These two follow-up surveys asked for more detailed program data, a 300- to 500-word descriptive abstract, and invited a "ten-minute essay" describing the future direction of TA training as well as barriers and constraints to improved practice. (The comments evoked by that essay invitation are the basis for Chapter IV, by Pat Hutchings. Selected abstracts appear in Chapters II and III.)

The program data requested included the number of students participating, whether participation is mandatory, the number of years the program had been in place, program budget, source of funding, TA stipend range, and whether the effectiveness of the program had been evaluated.

In their descriptive abstracts, the contact people were asked to describe the program's goals and desired benefits, the scope and range of activities offered, the number of TAs involved in the various aspects of the program, and any academic unit or university-wide policies regarding TA load and assignment. They also were invited to cover the role of faculty and experienced TAs in various TA-training activities; any special preparation for TA-training leaders; the relationship between the various providers of TA training; how TA-training efforts have evolved over time and how evaluations have informed change; the hopes and expectations for future evolution of their TA-training programs and practices; as well as the theoretical, philosophical, or organizational principles that have guided their program's development.