

Attending: Bly, Massaro, Rooker, Weber, and approximately 20 other graduate students.

1. Updates

- a. MGSC website is in transition. A new template is coming. Current website was introduced via projector.
- b. Professional development meeting has excellent attendance. Budget was increased as a result. Ideas for future such luncheons are welcome and can be sent to mgsc@math.utk.edu.
- c. Inquiry into GTA teaching loads at top 25 public universities is in process. The data will be presented to Dr. Feng, and it is expected to ultimately be presented to Drs. Brodskiy and Plaut.
- d. Strategic Planning for Teaching Committee has been instituted in the department. There will be a graduate student representative on that committee (Mark Bly).
- e. A questionnaire for current GTAs is expected to be distributed in the coming weeks. Please fill this form out, and be both open and honest. Dr. Feng reached out to the MGSC for question ideas. Some of the questions on the questionnaire may be a result of our suggestions.
- f. From student suggestion, MGSC will be conducting an investigation regarding how prelims are written and graded. A document is expected to be published regarding findings.

2. Tea Time & Social Events

- a. Tea time is beloved, but relies on graduate student volunteerism. Younger students can be paired with older students. Reimbursement of funds for purchased food items does occur.
- b. Potential fall social activities were discussed, including pumpkin picking, a haunted house, a corn maze, a haunted ghost tour, and/or a costume party.
- c. A possible Thanksgiving dinner among grad students was discussed. A pot luck the Friday before Thanksgiving break in Ayres was well received.
- d. A trip to the mountains for a hike was also well received.

3. Other Suggestions/Issues

- a. A Google group or similar to facilitate student-to-student communication regarding smaller scale social event ideas.
- b. A contact in the library can educate students on how copyright works.
- c. Suggestions are welcome for the 9:05am professional development seminar.
- d. Parking is an issue. Lake Avenue Garage may be a lighter trafficked parking structure. There is a petition online, and a representative with parking services to take issue resolution suggestions. Parking transit also has a hotline to tell you where parking is currently available.

4. Teaching & Mentorship Program

- a. Hearsay suggests Calc I may be changing to large lecture. MGSC has heard no such rumors.
- b. 119 program's regulated workload and structured design takes away GTA creativity and feels restrictive to GTA.
- c. 141 program students love it. The baseline to build off of is strong. There is flexibility to customize, suggested examples in homework and lecture notes are thoughtful, and meetings encourage philosophical discussion and self-examination which is very helpful. GTAs spending less time and delivering quality material. If there is a drawback, the course pace is rigid.
- d. With cancelling the one-credit teaching seminar for first-year GTAs, how will GTAs be able to have active discussion regarding course ideas?
- e. 119 weekly GTA meetings just discuss topics being taught. GTA suggestions not on the agenda are not well received, even if GTAs have reasons why their suggestions would be helpful. Meetings feel controlling, like "say this" and "do this". GTAs feel like they're just tutoring and not being prepared well for teaching.
- f. 119 course is very script-like, and script leaves little to no freedom to address student issues. Clarifications that could happen otherwise, can't occur due to time restriction. Ten minutes of flex time available last spring is no longer present. Clarification of content in video lecture cannot occur. And, GTAs have no contact with students outside of classroom to understand and address student problems. Students view GTAs as teachers, not just TAs. Students want

interaction and are given no opportunity for it. Students want office hours. What about a help room?

- g. Could GTA mentoring be reinstated? An opportunity to observe and be observed would be very helpful. Maybe the MGSC could orchestrate?
- h. Typical first-year schedule involves 5-6 classes MWF. Some students are eating lunch between 10 and 11am. With weekly GTA mentorship meetings, some first-year GTAs have 12 hours of contact with teaching duties. Time grading for 119 is 30-60min per section per class meeting. Tests require 6+ hours of grading.
- i. 241 GTAs are experiencing a significant increase in workload. A written outline of what is being covered in the videos and how it will be covered would save time. Strategies for explaining the course in a manner that is consistent with the videos would be helpful. Course materials (videos and textbook) feel not ready for distribution. GTAs feel like they're in damage control mode with no way out. Students taking the course are suffering.
- j. Perhaps a mandatory HW day for 119 would both help students learn and help GTAs learn to teach. And, rather than "say this" or "do this", perhaps "say something like this" or "do something like this".