

## Infosession: 2024 CUES Spanning Boundaries Challenge on Teaching & Learning Assistants

Monday, January 29, 2024



## Land Acknowledgement



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2023 MECha Workshop: Teaching & Learning Assistants in the Classroom Across Disciplines

**Read Now | Consensus Guidance >>>** 

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## Session Outline

- TA/LA Spanning Boundaries (SB) Challenge:
  Grant & Submission Overview
- TA/LA Recommendations: Key Takeaways
- SB Grant Preparation: Proposal Design, Research & Institutional Impact
- Q&A
- Speed Dating/Networking

TA/LA: Teaching & Learning Assistant

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## TA/LA Spanning Boundaries (SB) Challenge: Grant & Submission Overview

#### AIM

Advance innovation and change for TAs/LAs in the UArizona learning experience through collaborative innovation and scholarship in teaching and learning.

#### RATIONALE

There is a large variety in how TAs and LAs are selected, assigned, supported, and trained across the University. Contributing to a culture that supports teaching teams and values what diverse TAs/LAs bring to the student experience is critical.

#### **APPROACH**

- Cross-disciplinary & cross-unit collaborations
- Alignment with the **CUES mission**
- Alignment with TA/LA recommendations
- Deliberate centering of UArizona institutional identities (borderland land grant, HSI, AA&U, R1)
- Consideration of University assets, resources, and needs

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OFFICE OF THE PROVOST Center for University Education Scholarship



TA/LA Consensus Recommendations

## TA/LA Spanning Boundaries (SB) Challenge: Grant & Submission Overview

#### FUNDING

- One project will be selected and funded for up to two years, **starting in Fall 2024**.
- Budget is **not to exceed a total of \$100,000** over the duration of the project.

#### ELIGIBILITY

- Call is open to **cross-unit** or **cross-discipline** University teams.
- Teams must include **50% or more** tenure-track, continuing-status track, or career-track faculty.

#### **KEY DATES**

- Phase I: Pre-proposals due on **February 14**, 2024 by 11:59 pm.
- Phase II: Full proposals (by invitation only) due on April 22, 2024.
- NOTE: invitations to submit for Phase II will be extended by March 8, 2024.



submission guidelines

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## **Key Takeaways**

#### **Understanding Duties and Responsibilities**

• Variability in roles and forms of compensation across programs and departments can lead to confusion in duties, expectations, etc.

#### **Training and Mentoring**

 Resources are available at the institutional level and beyond, but these are not always well known, nor well suited for all variations of roles.

#### **Providing Equitable Environments**

- Equity issues regarding TA/LA assignments, responsibilities, etc., in departments/across campus.
- Increased diversity of teaching teams may help improve outcomes for diverse learners.

#### **Gathering Information on Impacts**

• Existing literature lacks evidence-based knowledge about how different TA/LA teams impact student outcomes.

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# SB Grant Preparation: Proposal Design, Research & Institutional Impact

### What examples of proposals are envisioned?

Examples include but are not limited to...

- Design studies to develop and expand on TA/LA training in varying settings and levels
- Develop and assess the impact of culturally sensitive training on TA/LA engagement and success in working with diverse populations, in different educational settings
- Study the experiences of international and underrepresented students in TA/LA roles
- Design studies to assess how diverse teaching teams may improve engagement and achievement for diverse learners
- Investigate what strengths do TAs/LAs bring to various classroom settings and modalities (online, active learning, online active learning) and how to enhance them

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# SB Grant Preparation: Proposal Design, Research & Institutional Impact

### **Design Considerations**

- Contribute to scholarship within the mission of CUES
- Poised to impact practice and broader impacts
- Leverage MECha Workshop Recommendations
- Informed by:
  - ✓ related research, e.g., on culturally sensitive curricula
  - ✓ inclusive practices
  - $\checkmark$  existing resources on campus and beyond

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## **Resources**

REPORT CUES Mapping Educational Challenges Workshop on "Teaching & Learning Assistants (TAs/LAs) in the Classroom Across Disciplines

Deborah Hughes Hallett<sup>1</sup> | Amy Graham<sup>2</sup> | James Hunt<sup>3</sup> | Joela Jacobs<sup>4</sup>

#### Introduction

This report summarizes high-level consensus recommendations from a two-day Mapping Educational Challenges (MECha) workshop at the University of Arizona (UArizona), held in April 2023, and dedicated to "Teaching & Learning Assistants (Tag/Lsq) in the Classroom Arcross Disciplines." The workshop, organized hosted by the Center for University Education Scholarship (CUES) at UArizona, included a multidisciplinary cross-section of 21 faculty and staff, spanning 5 academic colleges and 3 units/offices, discussed Tas/LAs in relation to the university learning experience. Resources and readings discussed during the workshop, and organizing committee member bios appear at the end of the report.



Center for University Education Scholarship

#### Framing the Challenge

There is a large variety in how TAs and LAs are assigned, vetted, and trained across the University. These differences also highlight the various forms and types of people who are part of teaching teams in classes. They include undergraduate preceptors, undergraduate TAs (UTAs) also sometimes known as Learning Assistants (LAs), graduate level graders and graduate TAS (GTAs). Team composition is further complicated by the fact that teaching teams may or may not include individuals who are studying in the field/content of the courses they are assigned to and have varying designations, pay scales, or credit bearing considerations. Building, training, and mentoring these teaching teams is essential for providing quality instruction.

Eliciting Perspectives on the Meaning and Composition of Teaching Teams The teaching teams used in courses across the University of Arizona vary greatly based on the discipline they serve, the goals of the individual department, and individual motivations of both the TAs and the faculty. The variations in training for these teaching teams raise issues of equity of training, equity in duties, and challenges in staffing.

Four guiding questions helped organize the workshop's discussions over the two days:

- 1. Which roles do TAs/LAs play in your courses, and what is or isn't working well in that regard?
- How do you support your LAs and TAs in their work, in terms of pedagogical training, content review, building a community of support, and/or addressing equity and inclusion?
- Based on a panel discussion with current TAs/LAs, what would help the TAs/LAs play the most productive role in your class(es), which activities might empower them, and how can we help them build meaningful experiences?
- 4. How do we gather information on, and assess, the impact of TAs/LAs in our courses?

<sup>1</sup> UArizona College of Science; Harvard Kennedy School <sup>2</sup> UArizona College of Science <sup>3</sup> UArizona College of Agriculture, Life & Environmental Science <sup>4</sup> UArizona College of Humanities UCATT: University Center for Assessment, Teaching, and Technology <u>https://ucatt.arizona.edu/</u>

Certificate in College Teaching https://ucatt.arizona.edu/teaching/college-teachingprogram

UA D2L Discover Courses: GTA Training Materials Learning Assistant Training Course (ITP) Learning Researcher Training Course (ITP) Instructional Manager Training Course (ITP)

Learning Assistant Alliance https://www.learningassistantalliance.org/

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1





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## **Speed Dating/Networking**

## • 5 Minutes – Organize

• Write your name/project idea on sticky sheet, post around room

## • 10 Minutes – Review

Circulate, adding your name to projects of interest

## • 10 Minutes – Discuss (Part 1)

• Return to a project of interest for networking

## • 5-10 Minutes – Discuss (Part 2)

Return to additional projects, as needed

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## **CUES Distinguished Fellowships Competition** Nominations due April 1, 2024 | Read More >>>



