Building a Community Resource for Teaching Assistants: The Statistics Department TA Wiki

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Introduction

Teaching assistants (TAs) support both students and faculty, but new TAs often face challenges due to a lack of clear guidance on teaching, grading, and administrative tasks. The TA Wiki was created to provide a single, organized source for department policies, procedures, and practical teaching resources. This centralized reference helps ensure consistency, reduces duplicated effort, and streamlines the transition for new and returning TAs.

Goals

The TA Wiki aims to:

- **Centralize information**: Combine all departmental procedures, grading policies, and technical guides in one place.
- **Support collaboration**: Enable TAs to share resources, solutions, and improvements with each other.
- **Provide practical teaching support**: Offer clear guidance for lesson planning, running sections, and communicating with students.
- **Save time**: Reduce time spent searching for materials and simplify the onboarding process.
- **Preserve department knowledge**: Keep resources and strategies up to date for future TAs and faculty.

What is the TA Wiki?

The TA Wiki is a single location for all departmental teaching resources, guidelines, and procedures relevant to teaching assistants. It is designed for ongoing updates, so TAs can easily add new materials, revise instructions, or share best practices as needs change.

Platform: Why GitHub?

- Easy **Version control**
- Allows **Open-source**
- Offers **Central access**
- Encourages **Structured format**

Organization and Structure

The TA Wiki is organized into practical sections for easy reference:

- **Introduction:** Role of the TA and expectations.
- **Preparing for the Quarter:** Contracts, instructor coordination, and planning.
- **Canvas Basics:** How to upload materials, make announcements, and manage grades.
- **Discussion Sections:** Strategies for planning and leading interactive sections.
- **Communication:** Best practices for student and instructor interactions, including difficult conversations.
- **Grading and Feedback:** Consistent criteria, feedback methods, and GradeScope usage.
- **Professional Development:** Resources for skill-building and community engagement.
- **Updating the Wiki:** Guidance for contributing new content and maintaining relevance.

Navigation is streamlined with a sidebar table of contents, keyword search, and internal links for cross-referencing related topics.

Impact

For TAs:

- Reduces time spent searching for teaching materials.
- Supports preparation with proven practices and clear expectations.
- Promotes consistent section management and grading.

For Students:

- Benefits from well-prepared TAs and clear support.
- Gains from greater equity in the classroom experience.

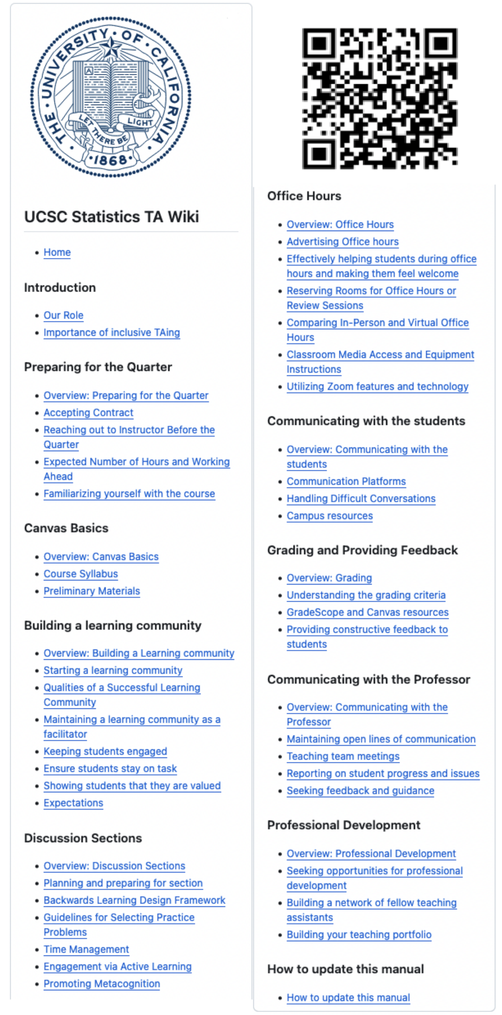
For the Department:

- Streamlines onboarding for new TAs and ensures continuity.
- Preserves department knowledge and practices over time.

Next Steps

Ongoing improvements focus on enhancing visual layout, expanding content, and encouraging more contributions. We aim to further streamline navigation and broaden the scope to benefit additional departments in the future.

TA Wiki Sidebar Example



Contact and Acknowledgments

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