

Developing Leadership Skills through Participation in the Graduate Teaching Academy Steering Committee (GTASC): The GTASC Model

Introduction

The Graduate Teaching Academy Steering Committee (GTASC) at Texas A&M University offers a unique leadership opportunity to graduate students who have completed the year-long requirements to equip them in the area of college teaching (GTA Certificate of Completion). Once GTA participants receive the GTA Fellow designation, they are entitled to join the GTASC. Serving on GTASC provides graduate students with a leadership skill development opportunity at many different levels of involvement; director, associate director, assistant director and/or group leader. GTA members from a vast number of departments meet weekly in small groups under the direction of a group leader. These groups serve as learning communities for the purposes of sharing and exchanging knowledge and experience. During the 2007-2008 academic year, 11 graduate students from 9 different departments, including 4 international students, were involved in leadership positions in GTA. GTASC enables graduate students to gain experience they otherwise may not have the opportunity to receive in their research; such as budget planning, event management, practicing interpersonal skills and much more.

Job Descriptions

1. Director

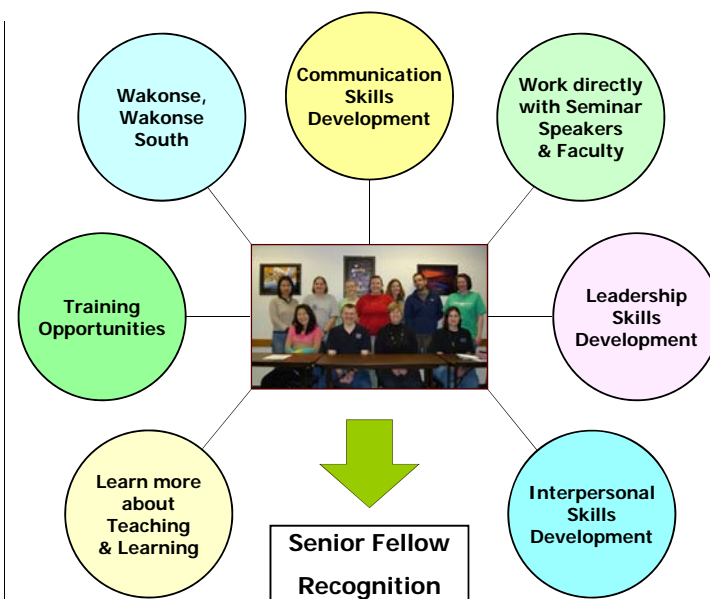
- Requires at least one year of prior involvement with the GTA Steering Committee.
- Expectations of the Director are:
 - (1) to develop and submit the budget request to the Office of Graduate Studies and the Center for Teaching Excellence prior to the program year (August/September - May)
 - (2) to ensure the smooth running of all GTA activities
 - (3) to maintain the GTA e-mail account (gta@tamu.edu)
 - (4) to be a primary contact person for the GTA
 - (5) to publicize GTA to the university

2. Associate Director

- Expectations of the Associate Director are:
 - (1) to reserve seminar rooms and to place orders for food (pizza)
 - (2) to contact seminar speakers and provide handout assistance and technical support before and during the seminars
 - (3) to arrange seminar rooms (using colored balloons to designate groups)
 - (4) to maintain a master attendance file for all GTA participants
 - (5) to distribute give-away items (such as GTA t-shirts) to the participants at each seminar
 - (6) to prepare thank-you cards and small gifts (usually GTA t-shirts) for the seminar speakers

3. Group Leaders/ Assistant Directors

- Expectations of Group Leaders are to:
 - (1) guide group members throughout the Certificate of Completion program (to send out frequent group e-mails on upcoming seminars and to answer group members' e-mails regarding the program requirements),
 - (2) collect all assignment submissions,
 - (3) help the Associate Director manage the central file of assignment submissions (by frequent update on their group members' status).
- Group leaders are the front people and key components of the GTA's success.

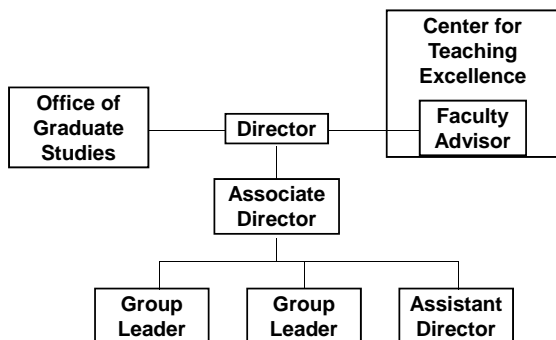


The Benefits of Being GTASC Members

- (1) GTASC members are given priority in the selection process for opportunities open to GTA members (such as Wakonse and Wakonse South conferences),
- (2) training opportunities exist exclusively for GTASC members (such as Strength Finder sessions),
- (3) opportunities exist to get to know seminar speakers and other faculty members better,
- (4) opportunities to develop leadership skills and good communication skills,
- (5) the ability to develop and enhance interpersonal skills,
- (6) to learn more about teaching and learning through access to teaching resources, such as the Center for Teaching Excellence and CIRTL,
- (7) recognition as a Senior Fellow after serving on the Steering Committee.

The GTASC model is a proven example of leadership skills development for graduate students, with multiple years of demonstrated success. Multiple years of experience with it have helped to optimize this model and support future opportunities of possible implementation in graduate-led organizations at other institutions.

Structure of the GTA Steering Committee



Kim, Jiyeon, Kenneth E. Viall, Dr. Debra Fowler
 Graduate Teaching Academy, Texas A&M University
 533 Blocker Building, 4246 TAMU, College Station, TX 77843-4246.
 Ph: 1-979-845-0717, Fax: 1-979-845-9242
 Email: kimjy1747@tamu.edu, kviall@tamu.edu, dfowler@tamu.edu



Jiyeon Kim
 Graduate Student
 Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences
 Texas A&M University
 College Station, Texas 77843-2258

Kenneth Edward Viall
 Graduate Student
 Computer Science
 Texas A&M University
 College Station, Texas 77843-3112

Dr. Debra Fowler
 Associate Director
 Center for Teaching Excellence
 Texas A&M University
 College Station, Texas 77843-4246