

MEMORANDUM

TO: Academic Department Heads DATE: August 13, 2007
FROM: Cia Verschelden RE: GTA Communication Survey
Director, Office of Assessment

To help to ensure that all of our Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) have adequate communication skills to be effective in the classroom or lab, we administer a survey to the students in their class(es) early in their first semester of teaching. Each semester, communication skills are assessed for all GTAs who are teaching a course or lab at K-State for the first time as the primary instructor or who having significant interaction with students.

Beginning in the Fall of 2003, the Office of Assessment and Program Review (now the Office of Assessment) has coordinated these efforts. The GTA Communication Survey process includes connecting departments with the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) so that they can make opportunities available for GTAs to strengthen those communication skills that are identified as needing improvement.

Since its formal inception in 1997, the GTA Communication Survey process has shown that a majority of GTAs do a more than adequate job communicating in the classroom/lab. However, in a few instances each year, significant weaknesses in communication skills have been identified. Communication difficulties can inhibit students' ability to learn and can interfere with GTAs' development as teachers. Therefore, the identification of problematic situations is necessary to provide training, support, and resources to GTAs in a timely manner. More importantly, we hope that all GTAs can use the review process as one way of improving the learning environment for their students and as a means of enhancing their own professional development.

This letter initiates the GTA Communication Survey process for the Fall 2007 semester. Our office needs the enclosed form, "GTAs Who Are Teaching for the First Time," completed by the department head and returned to our office by **August 31st**. Please also indicate on the form the names of faculty who coordinate and address concerns of GTAs within the department and the names of support staff who will be receiving and administering the survey packets. Please return the form even if you have no GTAs who are teaching for the first time. If you want an electronic copy of the survey, contact Steven Hawks (sjhawks2@ksu.edu).

Based on the information that you provide, our office will ask the GTAs to complete the GTA information and confirmation forms. Once we receive the GTA forms (due September 10), our office will supply the administrator in your department with the survey materials. Survey administration should take place during the 5th and 6th weeks of classes (September 17 – 28). Departments should inform GTAs regarding the administration date and time. It is critical that GTAs be informed about the survey in order to allow them to plan their class time accordingly.

For students assisting in labs who have limited interaction with students, you might want to wait until a time at which you judge that they have had sufficient contact to make the survey meaningful. Please indicate on your GTA list which classes will be surveyed later than the 6th week. Please have all completed surveys and materials to our office (226 Anderson Hall) no later than October 12.

Sara Fisher will be overseeing the daily activities of the review process this Fall. If there are any questions or problems, please feel free to contact one of us at cia@k-state.edu or sjhawks2@ksu.edu or call us at 532-5712.

Thank you for your cooperation.

CC: Ruth Dyer, Academic Deans
Enclosures

GTAs Who Are Teaching for the First Time

To be completed by department head or designee

Due on August 31, 2007

1. Department / Division _____
2. Check here if your department does *not* have any new teaching GTAs for the Fall 2007 semester. If checked, leave the rest of the form blank and return to Sara Fisher 226 Anderson Hall
3. On the lines below, list the name(s) of the FACULTY¹ who coordinate and address concerns of GTAs within the department. **Please print clearly.**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Email</i>	<i>Telephone</i>	<i>Building</i>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

4. On the lines below, list the name(s) of the SUPPORT STAFF² who will coordinate administering the surveys and/or address concerns of GTAs within the department. **Please print clearly.**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Email</i>	<i>Telephone</i>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

[An electronic copy of this form can be emailed to you.
If you are interested please contact Steven Hawks at 532-5712 or sjhawks@ksu.edu]

Office use only
Date:
Initial:

¹ Faculty coordinators receive a copy of the GTA Communication Survey results.

² Support Staff do not receive a copy of the survey results. Support Staff may include Administrative Assistants, Assistant to the Department Head, or student workers who assist with the Communication Survey by performing a variety of duties such as receiving survey packets, administering the survey on behalf of the Department Head, etc.

