LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to Fall Semester 2021 and the Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE) Newsletter! We exist to support teaching assistants and the broader FSU instructional community; we are very excited to be off and running with our goal of serving you in mind. Our newsletters will include tips and advice to help you succeed, spotlights on outstanding student educators within our community, as well as previews of upcoming professional development opportunities and other services we offer. If you ever have any questions about PIE or our programming, please contact us at PIE-info@fsu.edu

FUN FACT:

THE HASHTAG SYMBOL IS TECHNICALLY CALLED AN OCTOTHORPE. ACCORDING TO THE MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY, THE “OCTO-” PREFIX REFERS TO THE EIGHT POINTS ON THE POPULAR SYMBOL, BUT THE “THORPE” REMAINS A MYSTERY. ONE THEORY CLAIMS THAT IT COMES FROM THE OLD ENGLISH WORD FOR “VILLAGE,” BASED ON THE IDEA THAT THE SYMBOL LOOKS LIKE A VILLAGE SURROUNDED BY EIGHT FIELDS.
COPING WITH COVID

As we continue to navigate the unique and ongoing challenges posed by COVID-19 in our classrooms, it might be easy to feel overwhelmed or unsure of what we are supposed to do in our capacities as TAs. Fortunately, the Office of Faculty Development has gathered together a lot of helpful information in one convenient website for instructional personnel.

Follow this link to view the website:
https://fda.fsu.edu/teaching-during-covid

Beyond their excellent answers to frequently asked questions, we especially recommend checking out their decision trees—collectively a one stop shop detailing how to handle confirmed exposures, positive tests, and other related issues that may arise among your students and/or yourself. Here are two other tips drawn from several of our peers’ experiences:

1. Asking your supervisor to forward COVID-related instructional messages sent to faculty in your department/college can help keep you in the loop with new information closest to your TA duties.
2. Checking in with your fellow TAs on their ongoing experiences navigating COVID this fall can be a source of new ideas you might borrow for yourself on top of being a very collegial thing to do.

TA SPOTLIGHT

PIE invites you to nominate a TA that you have been impressed by. Do you know a TA that goes above and beyond? Has a TA made life easier for you in the classroom? Then show them how much you appreciate them for their hard work by nominating them for our TA Spotlight!

Fill out the survey:

1. Asking your supervisor to forward COVID-related instructional messages sent to faculty in your department/college can help keep you in the loop with new information closest to your TA duties.
2. Checking in with your fellow TAs on their ongoing experiences navigating COVID this fall can be a source of new ideas you might borrow for yourself on top of being a very collegial thing to do.

Slice of Advice

Have a dilemma in the classroom you're not sure how to handle? Looking for teaching techniques for certain topics? Need general advice? We are here to help you! Every month we will have a 'Slice of Advice' column in our newsletter answering your questions. Our experienced TAs are here to help in any way they can. Whether you're a TA, Instructor of Record or a GA! We want to hear from you!

Send us your question:
OCTOBER EVENTS:

STEM TA PANEL

Date & Time: Tuesday, 10/05, 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM (will be held virtually via Zoom)

Presenters: Cera Hsu (Chemistry TA) and Yashika Garg (Biology TA), 2021-2022 PIE Associates

Description: In this workshop, our presenters will share tips and techniques that can assist TAs who teach specifically for STEM fields. Feel free to bring questions!

Register Here

CHILLING TEACHING CHALLENGES: A HALLOWEEN SPECIAL

Date & Time: Friday, 10/29, 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM (will be held virtually via Zoom)

Presenters: 2021-2022 PIE Associates

Description: Welcome to our fun Halloween workshop! In this panel-style event, our PIE Associates will share the chilling challenges they have encountered throughout their teaching experiences and provide tips on how to solve such challenges. Some PIE staff will be dressed up for the occasion. You are welcome and encouraged to wear a casual (or over-the-top!) costume and show your best Halloween spirit!

Register Here