Department of Biostatistics & Medical Informatics

Provision of Teaching Assistants (TA) for BMI Courses

Background and Context

- In recent years, the Department has not had a policy or guidelines on when and at what levels we will provide teaching assistants (TA) in courses our faculty teach.
- The following policy is designed to stabilize this situation.
- Priorities of this policy, in descending approximate order of importance, are to:
  - Support our faculty in their efforts to be optimally productive across the balance of their research and their teaching activities.
  - Improve and maintain the highest quality of instruction available to the greatest number of students in biostatistics and biomedical informatics.
  - Maintain internal equity among BMI faculty in the provision of TA support.
  - Align with the Departments of Computer Sciences, Statistics, Population Health Sciences, and/or Industrial & Systems Engineering policies and levels with respect to TA support.
- The department will realize an increase in annual expenses in implementing this policy.
- A trial for 2 years is appropriate; policy should be re-evaluated during Spring 2015.

Policy

- The Department will fund TAs for courses taught by BMI faculty who hold a >0% appointment in BMI and are serving as instructor as part of their BMI duties, or if the course is owned by BMI or cross-listed with BMI as the primary department. Level of TA appointment, according to class enrollment, is given in the table below.
- It is expected that TAs for cross-listed courses at the level of 599 or lower for which BMI is not the primary department will be funded by the primary department. BMI may at the discretion of the Chair provide additional funds to hire TAs at a higher appointment rate commensurate with the TA level provided in BMI.
- Faculty members who recover at least 80% of their salary on sponsored projects will be provided TAs at a higher appointment rate with approval of the Department Chair (see table below).
- No TA will be assigned to more than 2 courses.
- Efforts should be made to ensure that every TA has at least a 1/3 total appointment, combining TA-ships and RA-ships, with a goal of a 1/2 appointment.
- The appointment of graders should be avoided. Graders do not receive health care or tuition benefits, their pay is relatively low, and their appointments are administratively complicated.
- All TA appointments in BMI need to be consistent with policies for appointment of graduate students as TAs, RAs, PAs, and Lecturers held by the UW Graduate School and by the appointee's home program or department.
- BMI faculty members are encouraged to select their own students as TAs for their courses when appropriate, to nominate their students for TA-ships in other courses, or to propose students who may have taken the course in a prior offering for TA-ships in an effort to recruit the students to work in their groups as dissertators or in other research roles. In this way we put Departmental resources towards the support of our own students and our own research programs.
- [Amendment, January 2014.] BMI faculty who wish to hire TAs under this policy are fully responsible for identifying the individual student who will serve in that capacity and at what level, for working with that student's home department to get him/her approved if need be, and for working with Donna Burnett to ensure that the student is appointed. BMI Department staff cannot be responsible for working with home department staff to identify TAs.
- [Amendment, January 2014.] In most cases, owing to SMPH and campus HR-related constraints, Donna Burnett needs to have names for students being proposed as TAs *no later than* four weeks before classes start. Reminders will be sent out approximately eight weeks before classes start during Summer and Fall Semester.
- Exceptions to these policies will be considered on a case by case basis and require approval of the Department Chair.

Appointment Levels

Number of Students	Appointment Rate	
	Standard Faculty	>80% Sponsored Faculty
0–14	No TA	0.17
15–20	0.17	0.33
21–30	0.33	0.50
31–60	0.50	0.33 + 0.33
61–90	0.33 + 0.33	0.50 + 0.33
91–120	0.50 + 0.33	0.50 + 0.50