To: Professor Erika Paterson

From: Byung-Sun Park

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Subject: Proposal for Enhancing Continuous Support for Teaching Assistants at the UBC Department of Computer Science

**Introduction**

The teaching assistantship program has played an important role in delivering large undergraduate courses to students at the department of Computer Science at UBC. The main duties of teaching assistants include leading weekly tutorial sessions and holding office hours as well as invigilating exams and grading assignments. As teaching assistants are involved in various parts of the courses, it is important that the department can provide regular support to help teaching assistants meet the expectations for quality teaching throughout the term.

Teaching assistants are expected to have knowledge of the course contents but may not always be familiar with the specific course logistics and teaching methods. Furthermore, most teaching assistants are graduate and undergraduate students who do not have a background in teaching. Although there are short training sessions in the first week and the performance review in the last week of the term, the department lacks continuous support programs for teaching assistants in the middle of the term.

**Statement of Problem**

Despite training sessions in the first week and the performance review in the last week of the term, there is no in-between departmental support program for teaching assistants to regularly review and improve performance and teaching skills throughout the term. The lack of regular support for teaching assistants throughout the term can result in inadequate performance and poor quality of course delivery. This proposed report aims to suggest recommendations for implementing continuous support practices to provide regular feedback and opportunities for teaching assistants to improve performance and teaching skills throughout the term.

**Proposed Solution**

One possible solution is to implement regular one-on-one meetings between teaching assistants and instructors. These meetings can allow teaching assistants to review performance and address any concerns with the instructors. To make the one-on-one meeting process workable and cost-effective, teaching assistants can complete a survey prior to the meeting to summarize any concerns or questions to be discussed during the meeting.

**Scope**

The proposed report aims to investigate and analyze the current departmental resources and assess the feasibility and potential benefits of implementing practices to provide continuous support to teaching assistants at the UBC Department of Computer Science. Six areas of inquiry will be pursued in this proposed report:

1. How are teaching assistants involved in delivering computer science courses at UBC?
2. Why do teaching assistants need departmental support?
3. What are the limitations of resources for teaching assistants currently available at the department?
4. What changes/additions can be made to current departmental resources for teaching assistants to ensure continuous improvement of the teaching quality of the courses?
5. What are the potential benefits of implementing practices to provide continuous support to teaching assistants?
6. Will there be potential obstacles of implementing practices to provide continuous support to teaching assistants?

**Methods**

The primary source of data for this report will be interviews and surveys with students and teaching assistants from the department of Computer Science. An interview with current and former teaching assistants will be conducted to investigate and analyze the status of current departmental resources available for teaching assistants. Furthermore, potential solutions and recommendations will also be discussed in the interview. In addition to conducting an interview, a survey questionnaire will be distributed to Computer Science students to gather various perspectives and experiences with the role of teaching assistants in the learning process

**My Qualifications**

As a third-year Computer Science student at the UBC Department of Computer Science, I have taken twelve Computer Science courses since 2019 and interacted with many teaching assistants in these courses. Furthermore, I currently work as a teaching assistant for a first-year computer science course, leading weekly tutorial sessions and office hours to guide students through systematic program design techniques. My experiences as both a student and a teaching assistant at the department vouch for my qualification to write a formal report on the topic of enhancing continuous support for teaching assistants at the UBC Department of Computer Science.

**Conclusion**

Currently, the Computer Science department lacks programs to provide regular support for teaching assistants in the middle of the term. By pursuing the six areas of inquiry stated above, I can investigate and analyze the current departmental resources and suggest recommendations for implementing practices to provide regular feedback to teaching assistants throughout the term. Once you approve my proposal, I will start research right away.

**References**

“Policy for Teaching Assistantship.” Computer Science at UBC, 25 Sept. 2017, www.cs.ubc.ca/students/grad/awards-financial-support/policy-teaching-assistantship.