

Teaching Commons News For Graduate Students

Renew Your Connection with Us

At the Teaching Commons we are gearing up for an exciting month of teaching events. Please join us!

A Renewed Focus on our Senior Teaching Assistants (STAs)

Since September our Senior Teaching Assistants (STAs) have been engaged in developing teaching and learning with their peers. They have been heavily involved in the design and facilitation of many of our Professional Development Workshops. March 19 was the final meeting before the STAY Symposium and featured group presentations by the STAs, reflecting on their experience as TAs in the STA program and revealing an action plan for their future development.

Our STAs from left to right: Lauren Tristani, Andrea Valente, Alina Cohen, Rachael Stone, Theresa Beesley, Holly Clayton, Terri-Jane Stapleton, Joanne Azevedo, Ramjeet Persaud Harinarain, Pat Breton, Thiru Kanagasabai, Bill Blackstock and Khyati Nagar. Jennifer Farmer joined us remotely.

The STAs request your presence at the STAY Symposium, the culmination of their year-long program...



An Invitation to STAY

The Senior Teaching Assistants (STAs) cordially invite you to attend the 2nd Annual STAY Symposium.



Come STAY! Come Support Teaching at York. Join the STAs for a fun-filled day and engage with your peers on a wide range of topics and issues that are central to your role as a TA, including: planning your classes, incorporating popular media, engaging diverse student learners, teaching students with disabilities, using active learning strategies, supporting first year students in transition, communicating cross-culturally as an International TA and much more!

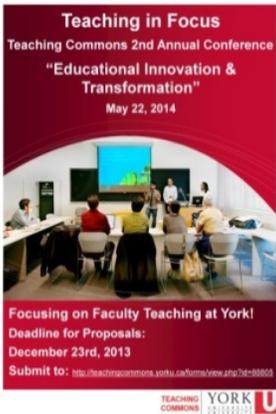
Join us on Friday May 2, 2014 from 10am-3:45pm (registration: 9-9:45am) in TEL 0016.

Participants who attend all conference events will receive a **Record of Completion Certificate**.

For more details and to **Register** for the 2014 Symposium, please visit our website <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/sta-conference/>.

Teaching in Focus (TIF) Conference

This conference is for ALL who teach at York. Graduate students are welcome to attend and are requested to bring the Course Directors they TA for and their supervisors.



Join us on May 22nd for York's 2nd Annual TIF Conference. This peer reviewed conference is about celebrating teaching, community building, experience sharing, scholarship of teaching and learning, and making connections to our colleagues. The theme of this year's conference is Educational Innovation & Transformation, with sessions on enhancing teaching and learning, e-learning, experiential education and student transition and engagement.

Keynote Speakers:

Dr. Rhonda Lenton, Vice-President Academic & Provost, York University

Dr. Harvey Wiengarten, President and CEO of the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO)

Feature Presentation*: Approaches to Teaching – 15 min. sessions by TAs with Q&A

* Each month until the conference we will feature one of the sessions to be presented.

Developing a 'culture of writing' in tutorials

This workshop aims to explore writing activities that are interactive, creative and foster the use of new technologies. By the end of this workshop, instructors will be more confident to help their students to create a writing habit that integrates lectures and reading during tutorials.

Presenter: Andrea C. Valente, Teaching Assistant in Traditional and Popular Culture Humanities, LAPS; PhD. Candidate, Department of Humanities

Dynamic presentations with Prezi

This session will introduce educators who want to deliver more dynamic presentations and lectures to Prezi. Prezi is a zooming presentation tool that can be used to make presentations, tutorials, lectures, etc. more interactive, dynamic, and engaging.

Presenters: Jennifer Farmer, PhD. Candidate, Department of Chemistry
Thiru Kanagasabai, PhD. Candidate, School of Kinesiology and Health Science

Safe Classrooms and Risky Conversations?

Informed by Bell Hook's work on critical pedagogy, we call for a multi-disciplinary focus on equity issues within the classroom and offer experiences in employing strategies to foster respectful, but challenging, conversations on oppressions and privileges; such as race, gender, class, ability and sexuality. We focus on the intimacy of the tutorial environment as an opportunity for cultivating a safe space for discussing issues of equity and oppression, wherein safety is understood as coping with the possibility of risk.

Presenters: Equity Reading Group

Details for the 2014 TIF Conference are posted on our website
<http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/conferences-and-symposia/tif2014/>

[Register](http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=109982) by May 8, 2014 at <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=109982>

What do Senior Teaching Assistants Say About the STA Program?

"The STA program gave me the opportunity to think critically and creatively about teaching in Higher Education. Being able to network with other TAs across disciplines allowed us to explore best practices and have targeted discussions about our tutorial experiences."
- Rehanna Siew Sarju

"Key to my ongoing development as a teacher is reflection and evaluation of my teaching practice. Thank you to the wonderful support and critical feedback of the Teaching Commons mentors and STA peers who all helped me reflect more deeply and critically on my teaching and student learning and engagement. Great learning experience in the STA program!"
- Pat Breton

"The STA program provided a fantastic opportunity to me for collaborating with peers across YorkU and has only increased my enthusiasm for teaching. The program provided timely and invaluable critical evaluations that validated my passion to teach in higher education settings".
-Khyati Nagar



York's First Summit on the First-Year Experience

On Thursday, May 1, York University will host its first Summit on the First-Year Experience in the Classroom: Rethinking Retention

This is a one-day teaching and learning summit featuring **Dr. Vincent Tinto**, Distinguished University Professor at Syracuse University of sociology. He is a noted theorist in the field of higher education, particularly concerning student retention and learning communities. Sponsored by the Office of the AVP & Provost, in collaboration with the Teaching Commons and the Division of Students, the Summit has been developed to support recommendations resulting from pan-University First-Year Experience consultations. Read more about the First-Year Experience consultations at <http://www.yorku.ca/vpstdnts/initiatives/firstyearexperience/>

All faculty are invited to the Summit and a small number of spaces have been set aside for teaching assistants. Faculty members can nominate a TA when registering for the Summit. So, **Graduate Students**, invite your supervisors to [register](#) by going to bit.ly/summitatork and ask them to nominate you!

Where? Sandra Faire and Ivan Fecan Theatre, Accolade East
When? Thursday May 1, 2014
Time? 8:30am to 4:30pm

RSVP by April 25. Spaces are limited!

A Lecture at Ryerson University

The Faculty of Science at Ryerson University is pleased to announce a lecture by the distinguished science education expert Dr. Douglas Luckie:

Less teaching, more learning

Authentic inquiry and verbal exams raise student performance on MCAT questions as well as upper-level science courses. Dr. Luckie's research group has compared gains in undergraduate student content learning over a 10 year period. In one study, the group evaluated learning gains after the introductory biology laboratory curriculum was changed to increase authentic inquiry. In another study the group examined the impact of using optional verbal exams as assessments compared to traditional written ones. Each change had positive impacts on student learning.

Date: April 10, 2014

Time: 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Location: Heaslip House, The Chang School, 7th floor, 297 Victoria Street, Toronto

Refreshments will be served.

Dr. Luckie is director of the CF Research Lab and STEM Learning Lab, Michigan State University (msu.edu/~luckie). His research is focused on fundamental aspects of cystic fibrosis biology, as well as discipline-based education research (DBER) into the use of a variety of pedagogies, e.g. visual models, interdisciplinary discourse and inquiry laboratories, to increase student higher-level learning in the sciences.

<https://www.msu.edu/~luckie/stemlearninglab/Site/Welcome.html>

What do Past Participants Say About the STAY Symposium?

"Presenting at the STAY symposium was a great opportunity to talk about pedagogical techniques with other TA's and get some great feedback"
-David Cappadocia

"TAs - I would highly recommend registering and attending the STAY Symposium ... last year, the workshops were unquestionably outstanding, organized and interactive...it's a day NOT to be missed! I left at the end of the day feeling totally revitalized and enriched having had the opportunity to attend. You'll not want to miss this valuable and rewarding opportunity."
-Terri-Jane Stapleton

"I attended the STAY Symposium last year...The workshops were tailored to TA's pedagogical needs and delivered in a variety of formats that included hands-on activities, discussions and reflective practices. It was a symposium organized and delivered by a diverse body of TAs that enthusiastically shared their experience with other TAs. Moreover, it was an event that allowed me to discover more about the Teaching Commons and to learn more about the programs and workshops they offer to TAs throughout the academic year."
-Andrea Valente

STLHE Conference at Queen's

The Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) will hold its 33rd conference at Queen's University in Kingston, June 17 – 20, 2014.

STLHE 2014: Transforming our Learning Experiences

To transform is to change, to adapt, to grow, to experiment, to evolve. Our learning experiences continue to transform in response to new learning paradigms and pressures.

Imagine...

Learning spaces and places reconfigured

Cultures and diversities intermingled

Ideas and people inter-connected

Frames of mind and worldview expanded

Learning architectures and landscapes reinvented

How are you redefining learning experiences? Join us at STLHE 2014!

Graduate students, please take advantage of the possible **bursary** to assist in your costs to attend STLHE, plus the reduced fees for registration and membership: <http://www.queensu.ca/stlhe2014/registration/stlhe-student-bursary-fund>

Another reason for you to attend is the first **TAGSA pre-conference** being held at the STLHE conference at Queen's on June 17, 2014.

This TAGSA (Teaching Assistant and Graduate Student Advancement) pre-conference focuses on topics specific to teaching as a TA. Titles include: Supporting innovative practice in teaching and learning among GTAs: Fuller's Stages of Concern model; Not a "Real" Teacher: Undergraduate TAs' Conceptions of Teaching; Teaching Assistant (TA) Orientations: Are we laying a transformative foundation?; Evaluating for transformation, transforming in our evaluation: How do we envision support for Graduate students and TAs?; Teaching Assistant (TA) Competencies: Provoking change and finally, Second Teachers in the Classroom.

For more information please see:

<http://www.queensu.ca/stlhe2014/program/pre-conference-workshops/tagsa>

Additionally, the TAGSA call for submissions for the TAGSA Best Conference Presentation will be sent out shortly. Please watch for that via the above link and consider applying.

TAGSA Call of Nominations

The TAGSA Executive Committee Call for Nominations is ready to go out to members.

If you are a TAGSA (STLHE) member in good standing and are not considering running for TAGSA executive, please consider volunteering to be the Nominations Chair.

As Chair, you would be required to do the following:

1. All nominations would be directed to you by the deadline of April 18.
2. Compile all nominations and request images and bios by the deadline of April 30.
3. Forward to Sylvia Avery no later than May 2 so that Sylvia can prepare the elections ballot web page.
4. Election results notification received by June 6.

More from our STAs...

"Having attended the STAY Symposium last year and taken part in the STA program this year, I can honestly say that both programs provide excellent opportunities to learn from the experience of other York University TAs as well as build and reflect on one's own teaching practices."
-Alina Cohen

"STA Program is not only a series of workshops to be attended over the academic year, but it is also a space for sharing teaching experiences with other colleagues from a diverse disciplinary background. After attending the last session, I realized that the program actually did not end. We have become indeed part of a community of practice that involves TAs willing to reflect collectively upon our teaching/learning experiences."
-Andrea Valente

Course Design for Graduate Students

Will you be a course director this coming academic year and are looking for some ideas, techniques and approaches to designing your course?

Course Design for Graduate Students – May 8, 9am – 4pm, TEL 1014

This course is specifically for graduate students who will be a course director for the first time or are looking to improve their skills in course design. You will be introduced to the basics of course design, taking you through the content, activity assessment and evaluation development process. The focus will be on a practical approach based on sound theory and evidence.

To Register please visit: <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=73161>

Highlights of Forthcoming Workshops and Events

Please remember all our courses are free of charge and are open to all Graduate Students (see <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/for-all-graduate-students/>).

Copyright at York: Tools and Tips to Support Your Teaching – April 14, 1-2pm, TEL 1014 or May 6, 12-1pm, TEL 1009

Copyright: Course Materials Development – April 22, 12-1pm, TEL 1014

Course Design for Graduate Students – May 8, 9am-4pm, TEL 1014

External Links of Interest

Life Stress and Academic Burnout

- http://journals1.scholarsportal.info/details/14697874/v15i0001/77_Isaab.xml

Instructional Technology Adoption in Higher Education: An Action Research Case Study

- <http://search.proquest.com/eric/docview/204274119/fulltextPDF/4D49E9667FF343CBPQ/1?accountid=15182>

The TC continues to offer numerous courses, workshops, and certificate programs for Graduate Students at all levels of their teaching and professional development. See http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/ta_support/ for details.

For information about our programs, resources and much more, visit our website at <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca>

Did you know?

You can easily access the upcoming TC events and programs by visiting our calendar

<http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/calendar/>

What do participants say about our workshops?

'I will try to reflect more, using the tools discussed here, in my own tutorials.'

'Overall excellent workshop. Would like to have a follow-up workshop to address more specific tips on accommodation with the classroom and making courses more accessible.'

