

Graduate School Primer Series: Developing as an Instructor

[AUDIO LOGO] SARAH DAY: All right, I see a couple of folks still coming in, but I'm going to go ahead and just start talking. And we'll let folks come in as we do sort of a quick introduction. So I want to say welcome to all of you. Thank you so much for coming to this session of the Graduate School Primer Series. Today's session is on developing as an instructor, and we're really excited that you're here today. We have a couple more sessions left. On Monday, we have two sessions, on Monday the August 14. That is Monday, right? And the first one, at 11:00 AM Eastern time, is navigating grad school, graduate school, The Good, The Grad, and The Ugly. And then at 2:00 PM, also on August 14, we have Exploring Your Career Options In and Outside Academia-- Make an Action Plan for Your Future. So if you're interested in either of those, we invite you to sign up for those and attend them. Just a note, we're recording today, and we're recording all the primer sessions. Give us a couple of weeks. We're working through editing and captioning the videos, and then we'll post them on the orientation hub on Canvas that hopefully you all received the invitation to join into that. And if you didn't, I'll put the link to it in the chat, and you will be able to access-- you'll be able to just-- when you go into it, you just say enroll with your NetID, and it'll let you into the course. And you can find some information for you there. Also, just one more note, I want to invite you all to come to our in-person graduate school dean's welcome on Thursday, August 17, from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM in Bailey Hall, and that will be followed by the TA orientation that's being offered right in the same building. So you guys can come and do those, and we will be excited to see you all in person in less than a week now. It's very exciting. So all of that said, thank you so much for being here, and I'm going to turn it over to today's presenters, Colleen McLinn and Derina Samuel. COLLEEN MCLINN: Wonderful. Thank you so much, Sarah. I'm going to start screen-sharing with the slides for today's presentation. Early on in the slides, we have a little get-to-know-you kind of warm-up activity. And so I just went ahead and posted that in the chat, so I won't be multitasking. So is everyone seeing the slides now? Give me a thumbs up or some other kind of indication, please. Wonderful. AUDIENCE: Yes, we can see. COLLEEN MCLINN: Thanks so much. All right, so to start things off, this is the Graduate School Primer Series-- Developing as an Instructor. And what we'd like to do today with our colleagues from the Center for Teaching Innovation and us from the Graduate School-- we are going to give you a presentation talking a bit about getting ready, whether you have teaching responsibilities this fall or are thinking about future career that you might want to develop your skills as an instructor for. And so we'll talk about resources that are available for you, various teaching roles, graduate students' experience at Cornell, and we'll spend a little time planning and identifying areas that you'd like to develop further or where you have some questions or concerns and how to get those kinds of resources that you need. So today, I'm joined by my wonderful colleague Dr. Derina Samuel, pictured here and with us live on video. She's the associate director for graduate student development at the Center for Teaching Innovation. And I am Colleen McLinn. I'm the associate dean for professional development at the Graduate School, and my particular interest and project for the past few years has been the future faculty and academic careers programming that we do in partnership with Center for Teaching Innovation and as part of a broader North American network of universities as well. All right, with that said, I am going to ask you to please give us a little more

information now that you know who we are about yourselves, and Derina's repeating this in the chat. But if you can figure out how to rename yourselves, tell us what graduate field you're in. Add your grad field behind the name. I see one of those showing up already-- electrical and computer engineering. And then this is just a temperature-taking question. As you get ready to start the semester, how are you feeling? You can give us one-word responses. You can have more than one, I believe. I think it will let you submit more than one if you have more than one one-word response. But give us some short responses. We're going to try and make a word cloud and see how people are feeling at this point in the semester and just get a sense overall of temperature and what's on people's minds. So with that, I'm going to transition over to Derina to talk a little bit more about the plan for the session today. DERINA SAMUEL: Thank you, Colleen. Welcome. It's really nice to meet all of you virtually, and as Colleen just mentioned, we just hope that you will put your fields in to renaming yourself. If you have any trouble with that, just let us know. One of us could help you with it, but the instructions are in the chat as well. And this is just so we know which fields are interested in what we're doing, and that's really helpful. So today, we have decided, Colleen and I-- we're talking about what this is going to mean for all of you as you come in to Cornell. We're excited, and we wanted to kind of give you an overview of what your roles could be as a teaching assistant. I'm not sure we'll find out later whether you're actually going to be teaching or not, but regardless of what has brought you here-- apparently, you're interested in teaching. So we will talk about more general aspects of a teaching career and how you could utilize the resources here. We'll have an action plan for you to consider. It'll help you think about what your skills are currently and what it is you'd like to develop, and the sooner you start to think about that, the more concrete your steps are going to be. And so that is really helpful. One thing we would like to point out is that we are going to expose you to a variety of resources or styles of teaching just so that you get a sense of it so that if you are teaching, you may want to try some of these things. Some of it is like the Jamboard activity and the Poll Everywhere, so we're doing a variety of things for you to get a sense of what we can do. I suppose we-- did we get the Poll Everywhere results there? COLLEEN MCLINN: Yes, we do. They were a little slow to come in, but now we have more. I think a number of people have the same words as each other, so some words are bigger than others. I can project that really quickly if you want. One second, please. DERINA SAMUEL: So while Colleen is trying to find that-- so the learning outcomes were just put up. We'll put them up again. But one thing that we are focused on is that we want to make sure that whatever we do, we're thinking about the learning outcomes of our activity. OK, as you get-- so there's excited. That's [INAUDIBLE]. COLLEEN MCLINN: Sorry. I had just a tickle in my throat, if you want to talk through that for a second. DERINA SAMUEL: Yep. So excited seems like something a lot of you are, but overwhelmed, nervous, anxious, worried-- very normal feelings at this point. I mean, this is brand new, and most of you are coming to a new place, a new environment, but definitely a new institution. But excited is-- I'm excited for you, and every time we start a new semester, I'm excited. But I'm also nervous even though I've been here for a number of years. So I can imagine if you're coming here for the first time, that makes a lot of sense. But we thought we'd just get a temperature gauge and to see how you're doing at this point in time, and feel free to let us know how you're feeling. And hopefully, we can alleviate some of your nervousness if you're thinking about teaching, but I know that through the grad school, they have a lot of different activities to help you get through this. So going back to the learning outcomes, in

terms of what we hope to achieve through this workshop is we hope that we can help you identify your current professional goals. And we say "current" because right now you may have some things in mind, but this could change as you get exposed to a variety of things at Cornell. And we hope that you will take advantage of all the different opportunities that are available, and there are a ton of opportunities. We wanted you to get a sense of what teaching support is available at Cornell through the Center for Teaching Innovation as well as the Graduate School. So Colleen and I work collaboratively in support of TAs at different levels. We work with people who are going to teach or who are teaching currently and through the future faculty program. They're also helping people transition as they think about future careers as well. And what we wanted to do is actually develop an action plan with you. We wanted you to get a sense of what it is that you want to do, and hopefully, actually putting that down on paper will help you achieve some of that. And the research has shown that if you actually write it, it's good because then you have something tangible to come back to and look at at the end of the year. So we highly encourage you to try this out, and we hope you find this useful. Next slide. COLLEEN MCLINN: All right, yeah. So the next thing we're going to do-- we're going to load a Zoom poll with these same two questions, and it'll be multiple choice. It will ask you, have you had any teaching experience? And choices are, not yet; yes, a little; or yes, a lot. And then second question, it'll ask you, will you be teaching this academic year? And we figured that one was a little more yes/no, although I put an "other." If you want to explain more, you can feel free to elaborate in the chat if that's unknown for some reason. So the poll should now be showing up. I know only participants and not the moderators can see it, but I see starting to get responses. Got about 10 in so far, and they continue to come in. So in a moment, I will display the results. All right, they're starting to trail off, so I think I'll go ahead and display the results for that. So hopefully, you are seeing the results now. Have you had any teaching experience? About a quarter of you said not yet. A lesser number have a lot of teaching experience, like 10%, and then most people are, yes, a little bit of teaching experience. And will you be teaching this academic year? Slightly more nos than yeses in that, but that's fantastic. The fact that you don't even need to worry about this right off the bat but you're still here is a really good sign that you're really interested in developing as an instructor, so fantastic. Thank you for doing that. All right, so going back to the slides, the next thing we're going to do is ask you to think-- and how this activity is going to go-- we're going to do what I like to call kind of a chat waterfall. So start thinking about your answer to this question in the chat and get it ready, but don't hit Enter or don't hit send quite yet. So the question is, think about or recall a teacher that really inspired you to learn. What characteristics or attributes of their approach to teaching do you recall as being really important for your learning? And so start thinking about this. Start typing into the chat some examples are explanations of characteristics, attributes of the approach to teaching that were meaningful for you as a learner or as a student, but don't hit send yet until we tell you to do. So we'll give you a little bit of time, and then when people have had some time to type, we'll tell you to go ahead and hit Send. And then we'll take a little time to watch all of the responses as they come in. All right, so that is the task right now. Let me just set a little timer so that we can keep track of how much time you're working on this. And if you're feeling ready, you can go ahead and start hitting Send on the chat, and we'll look and see the responses as they come in. Wonderful. Thank you for starting us off. Keep them coming. So far, we've heard from probably less than half the people, so we've still got lots more people who are thinking

and working on their answers. DERINA SAMUEL: We just want to encourage you to just put a word in. It just doesn't have to be a whole sentence or a paragraph. A couple of words is all you need, just something that would describe a teacher that you found inspiring. COLLEEN MCLINN: All right. I know it can be hard to kind of listen and read at the same time as you're busy thinking and writing, so we're taking a little pause before we reflect on those entries. They're starting to trail off a little bit, so we can start reflecting on them. So some of the things we saw submitted here-- supportive, kind, caring, attention to detail, knowledgeable, caring coming up again, understanding, taught you about learning and encouraged you to be flexible in learning strategies. That's fantastic. Curiosity and engagement, nurturing, approachable, enthusiastic, deeply engaged in developing relationships with students, knowing about their interests individually and connecting them even if not discipline specific or connecting there with their interests, inspiring excellence, approachable, allowing us to be involved, inspiring, very engaged with students during class time, always replies to emails, never discourages students from asking dumb questions or for reexplaining, and empowering. Wonderful. So we would like you to just kind of, if you're teaching this year, keep these attributes in mind. If you want to make a note of something that you saw that really spoke to you that someone else, perhaps, said in the chat, and you're like, that's a really good point. To me, that wasn't the first thing I thought of, but now that I've seen it, I think that's a really important attribute or characteristic of being a good instructor. Just make some notes for yourself for later in the session to keep in mind. These are really important attributes of good teaching to you or to your peers. All right, now I'm going to transition it back to Derina for the next slide. Thanks for participating. Oh yes, sorry. I forgot I had a slide about that. So looking through the responses in the chat, do pick a few attributes that were identified and jot them down for future reference for later in the session or for longer term. But for now, just for later in the session is fine to start. DERINA SAMUEL: Well, thank you so much for sharing this with us. As Colleen mentioned, a lot of these attributes are ones that may have made an impact on you, enough for you to actually write it down, and so do keep this in mind as you're thinking about your own teaching and how your students are going to be looking to you in the future. So what we wanted to do at this point was to start having you think about your future career goals, and we have created a worksheet that we hope will be helpful. I'm just putting-- it's in the chat. Oh, OK, so Colleen had it as well. I'm not sure. Colleen, is this the right one that I put in? You had the [INAUDIBLE]. COLLEEN MCLINN: Yep, same thing. It's just a short link to it. DERINA SAMUEL: OK. So thinking about this document, what we have is-- it's a Google Doc, but you have to make a copy for yourself. And so make sure you do that. And then we want to give you some time to actually work on it individually, so we just have you-- most of you have your cameras turned off anyway, but we'll just have you start thinking about this. And we'll give you about-- should we say 10 minutes, Colleen, or maybe seven to eight minutes? I'm not sure what our timing is like right now. COLLEEN MCLINN: It looks like we're right on time. DERINA SAMUEL: OK, so 10 minutes. COLLEEN MCLINN: 10 minutes is fine. DERINA SAMUEL: So we'll give you 10 minutes, and if you look at the document, it actually walks you through some questions. And we ask you that you could fill it. Thank you. So make a copy, and then go write in it. And you should have your own for you to think about. All right, so you have the professional goals. You have current skills and competencies. What are some skills that you think would be helpful? And so this is more just broadly. It doesn't have to necessarily mean teaching, but if you have teaching-specific skills, put those down. But we want you to

think about the skills and competencies you want to develop while you're here. Are there any competencies that you would have liked to have had, but you haven't had the opportunity to do so? Put it down. You never know, and this is a way for you to start to look for them. And finally, what we put down is, how have you held yourself accountable? Because oftentimes, you write these things, but you actually never go and complete it. So we want you to have this document and put a date on it. Say, I will review this document by, and I will complete my first goal to-- whatever one of the goals is. Pick one of them and put a date for that as well. I know that's a lot for you to think about in 10 minutes, but we are going to give you those 10 minutes because we think this is valuable. We'll check in with you. If you think you need less time, we may come back, so let us know. So we're going to give you 10 minutes. You should be wrapping up your document. Remember, this is yours, and we hope that you will continue to review this and go back to it, restart it, do a new one if you feel like in a couple of months once you've had a little bit of time at Cornell. But this was just some way for you to get started to be thinking about what you're going to be doing and just being purposeful about your next year because it's going to get very busy very quickly. So I'm going to transition this back to Colleen. COLLEEN MCLINN: Wonderful. Thank you. So the next thing we're going to do is kind of simultaneous, also somewhat individual, but we're all going to be working simultaneously. And we'll be able to see each other's work at the same time. But if this all goes as planned, this will be anonymous. So what we're going to do is launch a Google Jamboard, and we made a link to this Google Jamboard at the short URL that we'll put in the chat now. And so at this short URL, it looks like kind of a blank slide like this, and it has two questions. What questions do you have about teaching at Cornell, and what concerns do you have about teaching? And what you can do is add new sticky notes from this toolbar at left. The fourth thing down looks like a little sticky note, and then if you click on it, it lets you add a new one. So let me just screen-share that as well. How is everyone doing so far in trying to load and access this Google Jamboard? I do see people popping into it, which is good. Let me just screen-share what it looks like for a second. I'll show you what I meant about the sticky notes. As you probably saw, you can click on them. You can add a new sticky note. You can change the color. You can type, and you can save it. And then once it's saved, you can move it around, resize it, whatever. Two notes-- because you're added as editors on this communal space, please be careful not to hit Clear Frame. That would be bad because it would erase people's work. The other thing that people often do on accident is hit this thing at the top to add a new slide. That's fine. It's no problem to add new blank slides, but you might want to find your way back to this main slide in the navigation if you do that accidentally when you don't mean to. All right, so we'll give you a few minutes to think and work on this. And so again, this is essentially anonymous. We're not really paying attention or tracking or anything. You might be logged in with your Google already because you'll use a Cornell kind of Google account frequently, but we're not looking at who said what. So once they're up there, they'll be anonymous. DERINA SAMUEL: And if we run out of space on this first page, that's why we have multiple pages, so you can move on to the second one or the third one. So feel free to move on. COLLEEN MCLINN: All right, I hope that was enough time. You can feel free to continue adding questions later in the session if you think of something else and if you find you have other questions you haven't added yet. It's really fleshing out nicely with questions and concerns, started off with more concerns, and now we're getting more questions as people have had time to gather your thoughts about it, which is fantastic. So what we were

going to do-- as we mentioned, we wanted an anonymous spot to be able to submit questions and concerns, and we're going to save time at the end of the session for some open Q&A question and answer. And so we wanted to kind of gather these in an orderly, anonymous way so that we can think about what order to answer them in when we get to the end of the session to hopefully answer these questions that you have or start to help you find answers to them. So the next thing that we're going to do-- and again, you can continue to feel free to contribute to this Jamboard, but on the slides, I'm going to turn it back to Derina. One of the questions was-- fantastic question, actually, posted right up at the top-- are TAs expected to teach in large lecture halls or small classrooms with close student interaction? And that's exactly the kind of topic Derina was going to talk about next, some of the varieties of teaching roles. DERINA SAMUEL: Yes, so there are a variety of teaching roles. And typically, as a first-year TA, you would not be expected to go into a large lecture class. As far as I know, that's probably what would happen. I suppose if you have more experience, that would come up. But usually, it's as a TA, and it's with a TA team because if it's a large lecture, then there are going to be a number of TAs who are there. And so you're part of a teaching team, and you should have a lot of support because of that. But if you think about your role as a TA, you could be in a recitation. You could be helping out in a large lecture where the faculty needs help managing some of the logistics of the class, but typically, it's recitation where you would be explaining something in your field. It could be a lab, especially in the STEM disciplines. There are lab situations where you would be helping out with either explaining things at the beginning of the lab and walking around and helping them or supporting whoever is giving the instruction at the beginning of the lab. Studio is very specific to the arts and mostly in architecture. That is another way TAs are utilized, and so that's very specific. Thank you, Colleen. So STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math disciplines. This is something that happens quite often. We get used to all of the acronyms, and they'll become fairly common to you as you go along. But we have to be reminded of this. So thank you. The other possibility would be office hours where you would meet with your students for a half hour, an hour. It could be individually. In some disciplines, you actually have them in a class, and you have them coming through. And it could actually end up being almost like a class because there's a group of them who have questions, and you have to answer different questions. But those are one on one. And then there's grading. So there are certain courses where the faculty really require their TA to help them with their grading, and sometimes, the grading is part of your recitation responsibility. So it could be grading is involved in the lab and the recitation. So a lot of these pieces could depend on your discipline, on your field. And so when we were trying to decide how to explain this, it was a little hard because it depends on where you're from. And I notice that we have a lot of people from the STEM disciplines, science and engineering and math, so some of these that I've talked about will probably be applicable to you. And typically, not your first year-- but as you move along and you have more experience, you can ask to be an instructor of record or a co-instructor. For example, the first-year writing seminar is something that many students are involved with, especially those in the humanities, and so in those cases, you actually are responsible for the course and the instruction. And then, of course, the language courses-- you might do this on your own or in conjunction with another TA or with the faculty responsible for the course. So it all varies, and so all we're trying to say is that there are a variety of responsibilities that you might have. And having conversations with people in your department is absolutely essential because that's how

you're going to find out what your responsibilities are, what your role is. I see that there's a lot of questions about how TA assignments are made, and those are within the department. So you need to have those conversations. Don't hesitate to ask questions. As long as you are being polite about it and you are asking because you're trying to get information, I know that everybody would be willing to answer those questions. So don't hesitate. And in fact, you really should be asking questions. This is the time to be doing that. And hopefully, you have some kind of an orientation at the beginning of the semester in your field, and then that's a place where you can ask questions. Or you go to the graduate field assistant in your department, and they can help you with answering some of the general questions. Of course, whoever the instructor of record is, they would be the person who would give you specific information about the course or your assignment for the semester. COLLEEN MCLINN: And if I could interject for just one second, grading is another area where it's important to ask a lot of questions and make sure you understand the expectations. So if you're going to be responsible for grading, are you responsible for grading a part of the classroom assignments? Perhaps the instructor grades the exams and asks you to grade the lab reports that are submitted. Or is it another type of arrangement? And who is developing the answer keys that you're using for grading or the rubrics that you're using to grade student work if it's more open-ended written work? So making sure that you have clarity about what is your role and responsibility and what's the responsibility of a lead teaching assistant if they have people who have taught in prior years that are returning and helping provide more informal mentorship to a larger group of TAs, what's the responsibility of the faculty course instructor-- just making sure you're clear about that and having conversations and asking the questions that you need if you have weekly course-planning meetings for the course. DERINA SAMUEL: Thank you, Colleen. So what we wanted to share with you is there are a lot of resources that are available, and we recommend that you start off-- if you are going to be teaching in the future, this is something that you can do at any time. It's self-paced. This is the TA Online Orientation Canvas course that the CTI has provided, and that has a complete list of resources. So you can take your time. And if you sign up for this, you get it as a Canvas course, and you can go back to it. It'll always be there as a resource, just like this primer series is a Canvas course, and you can go back to the resources that are available. So keep that in mind, and you have that-- if you aren't familiar with Canvas, you have a dashboard, and you can go to the dashboard. And it'll tell you the different courses that you have signed up for. But in addition, some of the offices that you might seek support from is the Center for Teaching Innovation, and that's my office, which is the graduate programs. We have a variety of programming that we offer through the semester, and it's part of the GET SET workshops. And that changes. And also, there's a teaching conference that comes up and then the Teaching Portfolio Program. I'm going to turn it over to Colleen because the Graduate School is another resource. COLLEEN MCLINN: Yeah, so within the Graduate School, we're here in general terms to help you succeed and feel welcome while you're here at Cornell and also to feel like you're well prepared for the next stage of your career and like you know what you want to do after you leave here, where you go next as well. So my particular emphasis has been on future faculty and academic career preparation, so working with grad students and post-docs who think they're interested in academic careers or who are exploring that as a pathway. We do also have other types of career support, and Monday is one of the sessions on career exploration and thinking at this early stage about what you might want to do,

whether it's within academia or beyond. There is also often college- or field-specific programming. So for example, Engineering Learning Initiatives has a wonderful TA training program for TAs that touch on engineering across a large number of courses. The Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines is where a lot of first-year writing seminars for undergraduates are run out of, and they also have wonderful programming to help support you if you're going to be a teaching assistant or maybe someday an instructor, co-instructor for a first-year writing seminar. Or maybe you're a teaching assistant for a faculty member that has a writing-intensive course, and there's a special kind of teaching assistant appointment if you're going to be working with writing in the major's courses that are more writing intensive. And for undergraduate students, they could enroll in an extra credit and take a writing-intensive section of a course. There's the English Language Support Office as well, which is particularly useful for multilingual student support both for international students or anyone who's learning English as an additional language. And then Student Disability services is a resource that you might want to review a little bit of information on their website, and the TA Online Orientation will point you to some of this. But you might also want to point students to it as a resource for getting accommodations and accessibility needs met, especially with regards to coursework. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this, but over the years that Derina and I have been here and working with a lot of grad students, this is an example or a sample from one of the students of how they kind of developed over time. I know you're at the very early stages, beginning days, haven't even officially started until next week, but this is a sample of what one student's timeline looked like with regard to teaching development as they learned they were interested in exploring more. It started with field-specific required or university-wide optional TA training opportunities, began TAing for an introductory-level undergraduate courses first with lab and recitation sections, decided to pursue more teaching development, also pursued other things that touched on teaching and education like outreach and mentorship. Could if you're interested apply to the CTI Graduate Teaching Fellows. Program once you have some experience as a TA already, you can get involved in running workshops for other TAs. And Derina runs that. And then later this person in this example was able to construct a seven-week short course, an undergraduate seminar with their faculty mentor in their particular disciplinary area, an area that by then they knew a lot about, and then eventually went on to seek funding to participate in external conferences on teaching in their discipline and learn more as well. All right, so we mentioned we are going to end with a Q&A time, and so we do have time built in for that. That said, before we launch into that, we wanted to make sure we're letting you know and sharing with you the survey that you can either use the QR code or put in this link to take this survey. This is the post-session survey for all of the primer sessions but in this particular case, for this one, on developing as an instructor. So Derina, as an educator and someone who models best practice and teaching, likes to make a specific point that you want to, if you're asking students for feedback-- and we're asking you as participants in this workshops for feedback. You should carve out time that they can answer the questions and that they're not in a rush running off to the next thing, and so don't do it. Instead, make sure you're asking questions that you're going to act upon. And this is the first time we've done this specific session, so we are going to look at your feedback and think about, based on it, how we'd like to do this or if we'd like to offer this again in the future. All right, I'm going to turn it back to Derina because I got kind of on a roll talking, and I want to make sure that we have time to address everything that we are going to

talk about. DERINA SAMUEL: All right, thank you, Colleen. As Colleen mentioned, this is the first time we're offering this specific workshop, and so we really would appreciate your feedback. So please do give us your feedback, even if it's just very brief. I just want to go back and make sure that everybody was able to get into the Canvas course that we put the link for. This is the TA Online Orientation. And so I've had one person who said that they weren't able to access. It if you can't access it, could you just send me a private chat or put it in the chat so others see, too? That's fine, just so we know how many people are having trouble getting to that particular link. It's saying unauthorized. That is interesting. All right. Please, if you are having difficulty with this, could you send me an email at-- I'm putting my-- we probably should have our email addresses in there, too, Colleen-- so dss279@cornell.edu. So moving to the support that's available as you progress, some of what we've already talked about, the Center for Teaching Innovation programs and services-- we have a variety of programming, but one that I would like to specifically talk about is a Teaching Portfolio Program. So the TA Online Orientation is really to get you situated and help you be successful for the first couple of weeks of your teaching. And then after that, we expect that you come back and work with us on support because it depends on what it is that you're interested in. So we have a series of workshops, but the Teaching Portfolio Program is our umbrella program that helps you think about how you're going to document and reflect on your teaching while you are a TA at Cornell. And this has repercussions for later on when you're trying to put your materials together for the job market, but really, it's about documenting it, thinking about it, and meeting with someone. There's an optional consultation that you can take advantage of, and highly encourage you to do so. [? So it's ?] right at the beginning and you're just saying, I don't know where I want to go with this, we can certainly help you with that. The Graduate School also offers similar service, and so Colleen and I are doing similar things. So you can work through theirs. When you start to think about your career, they will help you with career exploration, review your CVs and cover letters. So we focus on more of the teaching aspect, supporting you while you're teaching, and then the Graduate School thinks about how you're going to be able to take what you've learned here and replicate this in terms of your materials for a job application package. Next slide. COLLEEN MCLINN: Think all we have left is to circle back to these questions. And we know you've been submitting questions through the Jamboard. Would it be helpful if I screen-share that Jamboard, Derina? DERINA SAMUEL: Yes, that would be helpful. COLLEEN MCLINN: OK, I will pull that up, and we'll try to answer a few of those now. We also are happy to stay on for a few minutes after the session formally ends at 2:00 if you want to ask something not in front of everyone as well, and we'll stop the recording at that part. But let's leave the recording on for the moment while we answer some more common questions, realizing that they were submitted anonymously, so hopefully, this won't be too scary. All right, so, oh, I was going to screen-share this Jamboard. One second, please. I have lost track of my Zoom window. And for the Canvas-- oh, great. Thank you for finding a better link for the TA Online Orientation and information about how to get enrolled in that. So Derina's unit, the Center for Teaching Innovation, they work around both teaching excellence, active learning and best practices in teaching, but they also have the unit that supports academic technologies under that as well. So they do offer other programming and support around using technology and teaching to technologies like the Canvas courses. So it's a great place to seek assistance. All right, so I'm going to move this window with people's pictures. And these are some of the questions and concerns people have submitted so far, so I'll

just recap a few of the concerns. And then we'll try and get to some of the questions. Concerns about teaching-- how to cope; time; workload in the context of other responsibilities; balancing it all; TA responsibilities; lab or other research you're doing; your own coursework; coming from a different background than students; undergraduates knowing more than you; classroom management; maintaining respect, attention, and focus from students if they're tired, plugged into their phones, et cetera; not being able to answer all the questions, TA requirements and capability to manage all the assignments; and teaching a subject that they don't fully understand. All right, now we have some great questions as well-- transitioning from a different educational system. Common blunders for first year TAs is a great one. I don't know if you want to take that first or if you're thinking in a different order, Derina. I'm going to maybe move a couple around that I see as touching more on Graduate School policy, and if we have time, I'll address a couple of those. But I want to let you speak first about some of the questions about teaching at Cornell. DERINA SAMUEL: All right, so question. So I think the one question that I did bring up-- are TAs expected to teach in large lecture halls or small classrooms with close student interaction? It's so dependent on your discipline and your field, but as I mentioned, the chance of you actually teaching in a large lecture hall right away are slim to none. So I don't think you need to worry about that. Small classrooms, definitely student interactions-- that should be there. And I'm hoping that you have had some preparation or some communication with your field about what the course is that you're going to be teaching, but if you haven't, again, as we mentioned earlier, feel free to ask questions. And all right, so how are TAs-- and if you don't feel comfortable teaching a certain subject, again, it is field specific. And I think you could definitely bring this up with the director of graduate studies or your advisor or the instructor of record, whoever you've been assigned to. I think you could bring it up, and if you have a valid reason for why you don't feel comfortable teaching the class, you could do that. You may not have much of an option because it might be an introductory class, and they expect you to have had that introductory information available. So you should be able to-- so I've known TAs who have had to learn some of the material ahead of time before they teach it. But it doesn't hurt to ask, and so I would say, do communicate with people in your department. And how are the TA assignments made? It may or may not be done asking the TAs. It could be that they need somebody, and you are the person that is available. So you're the one who's assigned. Especially the first year, you may not have too much of a choice, but as you progress in your career and if there's specific courses that you want to teach, you certainly can ask. Again, it's all about communication, and so don't be hesitant about asking for specific things. So if you're thinking about your action plan and if you have a goal of teaching a particular course, because that's something you might want to do later on, make sure that you actually ask if there's an opportunity to do so. So you may have some ability to be able to get that done. Is there a limit on the number of times I can serve as TA? Again, it's field specific. COLLEEN MCLINN: But this would be-- yeah. This might be a good-- DERINA SAMUEL: [? Is ?] [? it ?] [? more ?] like a policy? COLLEEN MCLINN: --a good chance to point to a couple of sections of the grad school website that might be relevant. Actually, let me see if I can just-- let me see if I can just move these to the same window that I've already got up. All right, so on the grad school website, which is gradschool.cornell.edu, a couple of sections that are kind of relevant to TAing-- academic progress. So this would be a question about what's feasible within the context of the requirements and things you need to do for your graduate degree. You can find some more

really useful kind of information here, and we'll get you kind of started at the in-person Graduate School Dean's Welcome Event next Thursday morning and through other resources on the Graduate School fall orientation Canvas site. But figuring out what your major requirements are for progress is important so that you can stay on time to make sure you meet the milestones about like forming a special committee, doing responsible conduct-of-research training, doing an annual kind of student progress review process, making sure you do any required exams, and then ultimately, if you're in a research degree program, submitting a dissertation or thesis. The other area of the Graduate School website that's particularly relevant-- under the financial support section, it talks about, for example, assistantships, so the average number of hours that you're expected to spend on a teaching assistantship and university policy around these things, any special information for incoming international students who will be teaching in the US, and programs available through the Center for Teaching Innovation on that and then support resources and other kind of slightly more in-the-weeds questions as well as information about the stipend rates for all of this and the average number of hours and what the terms look like in terms of nine-month terms or if, in some cases, more rarely, people might have a summer assistantship. But often, people are supported on fellowship funding over the summer if you're in a research degree program. So I do see we are at time. The other thing I wanted to point out-- you'll see this as you start getting the grad school announcements, but you can submit an Ask a Dean question as well if you have a kind of detailed policy question. You're struggling to understand something. You can also always send questions to the overall email addresses for the Graduate School or for the Center for Teaching Innovation, too. And we have student-facing people that monitor those email addresses and try to get them directed to the right place. All right, I'm going to pull up the final screen of our PowerPoint as well. DERINA SAMUEL: [INAUDIBLE] Colleen, I just wanted to-- because we're at time, I wanted to just make sure that we-- we do have time. We're here for a few more minutes, so we're happy to answer any questions that you might have. But a lot of these questions that are the concerns that were brought up will be addressed in our TA orientation next week, next Thursday, right after the Graduate School-- the dean's welcome to new graduate students. We have a TA orientation by the Center for Teaching Innovation, and we have experienced TAs who are going to be there. And they will facilitate small-group discussions. So feel free to come. We hope you'll come to that, and feel free to ask those questions. I will make sure that we have these questions available for us to answer, too. Yes, thank you.