Dear Research Project Assistant:

I welcome you to ESF (or back to ESF if you are a returning student) and congratulate you on your appointment as a Research Project Assistant (RPA). To help you prepare for your work as an RPA, I invite you to participate in the Annual Colloquium on Teaching and Learning. Although the Colloquium is specifically designed to prepare Graduate Assistants (GAs) for their instructional support roles, we have come to realize that many portions of the Colloquium pertain to your position as an RPA and will provide you with essential campus resource information and a network of other RPAs, GAs, faculty and staff. Moreover, our experience indicates that graduate students often find themselves in both GA and RPA roles through the course of their graduate study. Participation now would also fulfill your requirement should you be hired as a GA in future semesters.

I believe you will find the Colloquium to be a valuable professional development experience that will serve you in the short-term, as well as throughout your graduate study and beyond. This is a unique opportunity to become part of a diverse and talented group of people who share a commitment to excellence in teaching, research and outreach.

With the safety concerns and uncertainty around the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we have elected to hold the Colloquium entirely online this year. The Colloquium will be available to complete during the week before classes, which coincides with the first week of most GA and other appointments. As of July 1st, 2020, ESF is planning to resume instruction with classes beginning on Monday, August 24th. This means that the Colloquium would be **the week of Monday, August 17th**. Details are still being worked
out and are subject to change, so we ask that you register for the Colloquium now so that we may contact you with updates as we proceed.

We plan to make all the resources you need to complete the program available asynchronously, meaning that you can complete them on your own schedule over the course of the week. We are also planning to host live, interactive sessions with our Colloquium Fellows and partnered faculty and staff to allow for discussions and more. These will likely be clustered in the middle to end of the week, and will be recorded and posted for later viewing, and will be announced as soon as we are able to confirm the schedules of our faculty and staff partners.

We plan to use Blackboard for these resources, and it is how we will monitor completion. If you are unfamiliar, or need a refresher, the Open Academy has created a series of Blackboard Trainings, which are aimed at faculty, but beneficial for GA’s as well. We would direct you specifically to the Getting Started in Blackboard folder.

To prepare, please review the enclosed document and complete the registration as soon as possible. This registration will also be how we add participants to the Blackboard course.

Please feel free to contact me or my colleague, Mary Rathbun, at 315-470-6817 with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Brandon Murphy
Coordinator, Open Academy Teaching and Learning Center

Copied to: ESF Faculty, President’s Office, Provost Office, Graduate School Dean, Department Chairs, Teaching Fellows

Enclosure: Preparing for the Graduate Assistant Colloquium on Teaching and Learning
Preparing for the Graduate Assistant Colloquium on Teaching and Learning

When?

- The week before classes begin: Monday, August 17th - Friday, August 21st
- Live sessions will be announced for the middle/end of that week

What will I do?

- Complete required training related to Teaching Strategies, Assessment, Title IX, Environmental Health & Safety, etc.
- Participate in discussions (via online discussion boards or during live sessions) related to best practices, and ask questions of other GAs and faculty
- Meet fellow graduate students, and network to make friends and develop a support network

How do I prepare?

- Register for the Colloquium
- Make sure that you activate your SU Netid (which you will use to log in to Blackboard).
- Reserve time in your schedule the week of August 17th to complete program requirements and ideally participate in live sessions (specific dates/time TBA)
- (Optional) Visit the Colloquium website to view previous years programs and resources
- Keep an eye on your email for further announcements

For additional information please visit the Colloquium web site: https://www.esf.edu/openacademy/tlc/colloquium/default.htm