Department of Astronomy

MANDATORY A.I. TRAINING

(Revised April 2019)

Indiana University requires that A.I.'s receive some formal training. All new A.I.'s at IU are required to attend a workshop on teaching strategies for working with diverse populations that is offered before the start of the Fall Semester. The department assumes that students who are assisting in courses taught by faculty members will be informed directly about their teaching and grading responsibilities by the specific faculty member they are assisting. There is also a handbook for Associate Instructors at IU that is prepared by the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning (CITL). All beginning A.I.'s should read and consider it thoughtfully, especially those who did not attend a large state university as undergraduates.

Astronomy department graduate students have the opportunity to teach small classes on their own, including A100, A103, A105, and A107 in summer sessions or evening sections during the academic year. **To be eligible for these teaching opportunities, students must participate in the department's formal A.I. training program.** This program has two components:

1) attendance at seminars offered by the Astronomy Department or, with the approval of the DGS, lectures sponsored by the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, and
2) participation in a formal mentoring program with a department faculty member during each independent teaching assignment.

In addition, to be eligible to teach an online course, students must attend at least one seminar related to online teaching.

The Department and the university will offer seminars on teaching at various times during the academic year. To satisfy component #1, new graduate students are expected to attend and participate in at least three such seminars during their first year. (Note that typically, attendance at the teacher training seminars that are required as part of the incoming graduate student orientation activities will satisfy this requirement in most students' first years.) Students continuing as A.I.'s are required to attend at least one teaching seminar per year in subsequent years. Several CITL lectures are offered each semester, and most (but not all) are relevant preparation for teaching small sections of 100-level astronomy courses. With permission of the DGS, students may attend CITL lectures that are relevant to teaching astronomy as an alternative to departmental seminars. The Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Secretary will maintain records of student participation to assure that students who teach summer and evening courses are qualified to do so. Students can help facilitate this process by informing the DGS and the Graduate Secretary when they have participated in a teacher training seminar.

Students with summer and evening teaching assignments will be assigned a faculty mentor to provide guidance and feedback. Students are responsible for contacting the mentor prior to the start of the course to discuss teaching approaches and during the course to discuss progress and any issues that arise. For face-to-face classes, faculty mentors are responsible for attending at least one class (and usually two or more) to provide advice and feedback to the student instructor. For

online classes, faculty mentors should be added to the Canvas site so that they can experience the online learning environment. Students are encouraged to seek additional teacher training from the CITL or department faculty, if they feel it would be useful in their development as effective educators.

Students who are teaching courses are required to use the Department's standard course evaluation methods at the end of the term (course evaluations are currently administered online; instructors may add a limited number of additional questions if they wish). The results of the course evaluations are accessible by the course instructor and are also reviewed by the department Chair (this is true for all courses taught by faculty or graduate students in the department). Graduate students are encouraged to save the information in their course evaluations so that it can be used as part of their teaching portfolio.