

# RESTRUCTURED GTA PROGRAM

For over a decade, our department has employed some MS students to teach ENGL 3560 Technical Writing and TCH COM/ENGL 1600 Introduction to Technical Communication. In the past, these graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) were given full instructional responsibility for one section of a course each semester. In any given semester, there were typically six GTAs on the department's payroll.

This arrangement changed in Fall 2020. Our department was able to fund fourteen GTAs to teach two sections each. For the first time ever, some GTAs taught sections of ENGL 1120 Exposition and Argumentation and ENGL 1160 Writing and Research.

The nine GTAs teaching ENGL 1120 in Fall 2020 were essentially managing classes for the first time, cutting their teeth as instructors during the height of the pandemic. But they were not alone. Helping them were Dr. Carleigh Davis, assistant professor of technical communication, and Dr. Josselyn Larson, assistant teaching professor of English. Davis is the director of the GTA program and Larson is an experienced composition teacher.

Even though they were teaching courses, the GTAs were still required to give adequate time to their own studies by attending classes, completing assignments, and maintaining good grades. Effective planning and time management were keys to efficiently managing these responsibilities. As one GTA explained, "I keep two calendars: a Google calendar and whiteboard where I plan activities for the week every Sunday. I try



**Vivian Barnes and Oluwafemi Osho having a discussion at the library**

to be detailed enough to highlight the entire week's work before Monday so I can keep track of what needs to be done and when."

Teamwork among instructors was crucial. One GTA said, "For 1600, because I'm with Dr. Davis and Dr. [Dan] Reardon, we tend to bounce video recordings off of each other. If one of us already had a video done, we may just use it for all the sections."

The department is fully committed to providing the necessary enabling environment for the GTAs to continue to function effectively as teachers and succeed as students.



**Daniel Ochekwu talking with a student**



**Mariter White studying usability**