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Blog Post #1

Hello Everyone! My name is Tamara Garner and I’m from Fort Washington, Maryland. This is my second semester UTAing for the ENGL393-Technical Writing course with Professor Scott Moses and this course is held completely online. I’m a senior Communication Studies studentwith a minor in Technology Entrepreneurship. When I’m not in school, I work two part-time jobs as a Marketing Assistant at Prince George’s Community College Center for Entrepreneurial Development and as a Keyholder at ASICS America outlet in National Harbor, MD. In my free time, I like to teach dance, paint, hang out with friends, and travel. Last semester was awesome because not only was I able to learn what it was like to be a UTA, but I was served as a peer mentor to my students, shared different ideas and perspectives with my fellow UTAs, and taught different lessons throughout the semester to my students and one lesson to my UTA class.

I decided to return as a UTA this semester because I loved the experience of being a UTA and it has allowed me to grow and develop in ways that I could never imagine. I love helping students because we all need guidance in some area or another and since this is my last semester at UMD, I wanted to make a lasting impression on a new group of students before I graduated. I believe being a UTA is a very rewarding opportunity because it guides me towards being a leader, it gives me the opportunity to see the other side of the spectrum of being a teacher rather than a student, and it challenges me to think in ways I may not have thought of before. One experience I believe had a positive impact on my students is when I taught my lesson plan and I asked the class to fill out a short survey to receive their feedback on what I could have done better. I think this had a positive impact on my students because most of the students felt like the lesson plan was helpful and I received some positive comments on what I did well and some improvements that I could make. The survey helped me to distinguish how I can make learning better for students this semester and the areas in which they may need help more in than others.

For this semester, I would like to take on different responsibilities such as creating a social media analysis project to help students analyze information while conducting their research on certain companies for their proposals and recommendation reports as well as continue to provide feedback on their peer review assignments. I would also like to hold office hours where students have the option to meet with me in person by scheduling an appointment or conducting an online meeting. My goals this semester are slightly different than last semester because I want to focus on interacting with my students more and I plan to take on some of the new tasks that are assigned such as our learning artifact and conducting class observations of first-time UTAs. Lastly, if there was one piece of advice I would give to first-time UTAs it would be to take initiative by thinking of new ways that you could help your professor improve course activities and allow the course to run more smoothly and to be confident when teaching your lesson plans to your students (especially if you’re introverted like me!) because it will help you to perform so much better.