



May 22, 2020

Travis Cao
travis.cao@wisc.edu

Dear Travis:

Due to the COVID-19 disruption, classes were moved online over spring break. Thank you for your hard work and dedication in adapting to teaching online and contributing towards a successful spring semester. With this information in mind, the Department of Economics Teaching Assistant Review Committee examined student and faculty evaluations of your teaching performance during the Spring 2020 semester. It is a pleasure to inform you that the excellence of your teaching during the semester warrants a citation as a "Distinguished Teaching Assistant." The Committee concluded that you were one of the truly outstanding TAs in the spring semester. Being a highly successful TA involves considerable effort and dedication. You have made a substantial contribution to the quality of our teaching program. We extend our congratulations and believe that your performance augurs well for your future, especially in the classroom. Your efforts are greatly appreciated!

The Committee thought it might be helpful for each TA to have the following information:

Spring 2020 Question (#6)	
Frequency Distribution of Average Scores on "Rate Performance"	
Range	Number of TA's Receiving this Average Score
4.6 – 5.00 (Distinguished)	15
4.2– 4.59 (Excellent)	18
3.5 – 4.19 (Good)	24
3.0 – 3.49 (Satisfactory)	0
Below 3.0	2

Average TA rating on this question was 4.22

Copies of this letter, the faculty evaluation, and student evaluation summary will be included in your file.

Sincerely yours,

Marzena Rostek
Juli Plant Grainger Distinguished Chair of Economics
Chair, TA Review Committee

ECON End of Semester TA Course Evaluation Spring 2020


Completed

2020 Spring (1204) / Student Course Evaluation (End of Term) / Anonymous Survey

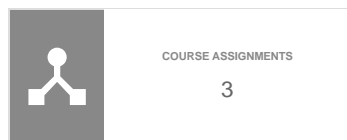
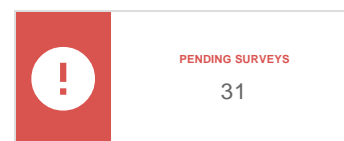
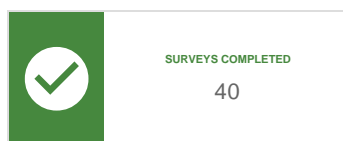
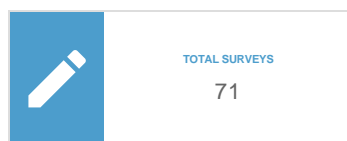
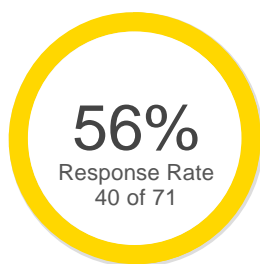
Schedule: 4/17/2020 to 5/5/2020

Course Assignments: 179 / Survey Participants: 3926

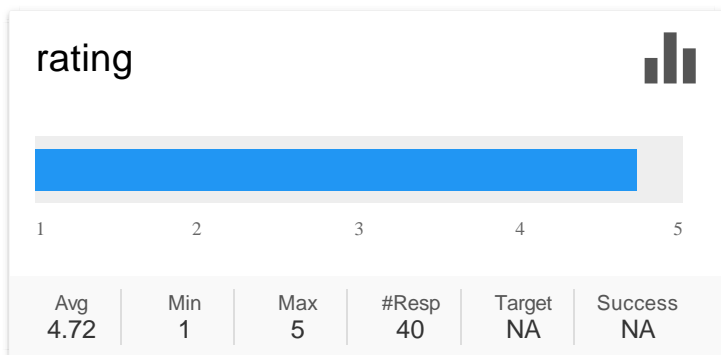
Results Available: 5/15/2020

 This survey completed on **Tuesday, May 5, 2020** at 11:59PM.

Survey Overview / Instructor Results Aggregate



Survey Metrics / Instructor Results Aggregate



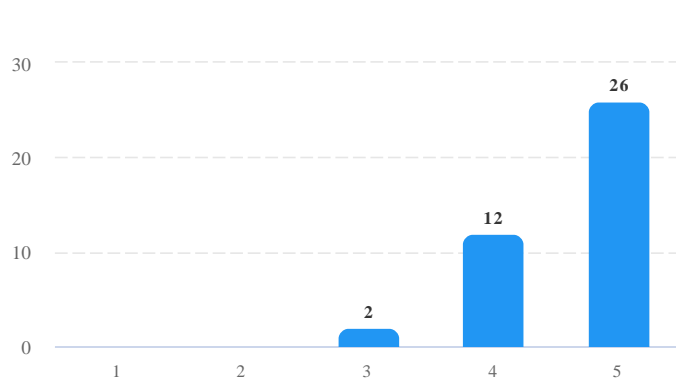
Survey Data / Instructor Results Aggregate

 Section 1
 DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS TA EVALUATION

I-Teaching Assistant

1 How many of the discussion or lab sections led by the TA have you attended so far?
 (Multi-Choice, Single Answer)

Value	Option	Total
1	None	0
2	One	0
3	Two - Five	2
4	Six - Ten	12
5	11 or more	26

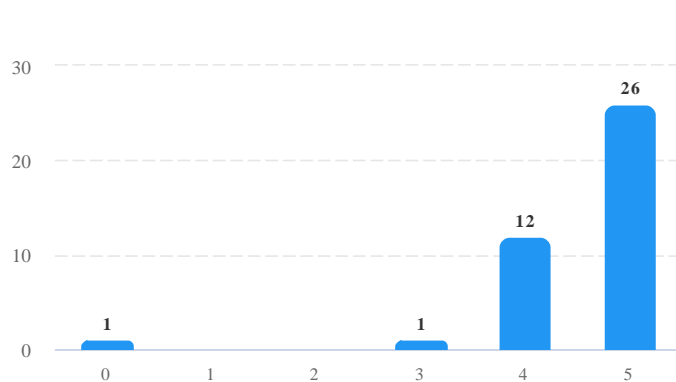


Average	4.60
Median	5.00
Mode	5
Std. Dev.	0.58
Variance	0.34

2

How would you rate the TA's ability to lead discussion or present material in your section?
(Multi-Choice, Single Answer)

Value	Option	Total
0	Did not attend	1
1	Poor	0
2	Fair	0
3	Average	1
4	Good	12
5	Excellent	26

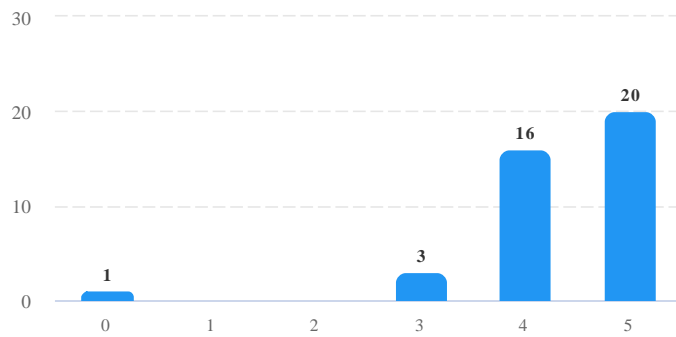


Average	4.64
Median	5.00
Mode	5
Std. Dev.	0.53
Variance	0.28

3

Of those sections you have attended, what proportion were interesting and/or thought-provoking?
(Multi-Choice, Single Answer)

Value	Option	Total
0	Did not attend	1
1	Almost none	0
2	Few	0
3	About Half	3
4	Most	16
5	Almost all	20



Average	4.44
Median	5.00
Mode	5
Std. Dev.	0.63
Variance	0.40

4

Overall, what is your assessment of the TA's knowledge of the material related to this course?
(Multi-Choice, Single Answer)

Value	Option	Total
0	Did not attend	1
1	Poor	0
2	Fair	0
3	Average	0
4	Good	6
5	Excellent	33

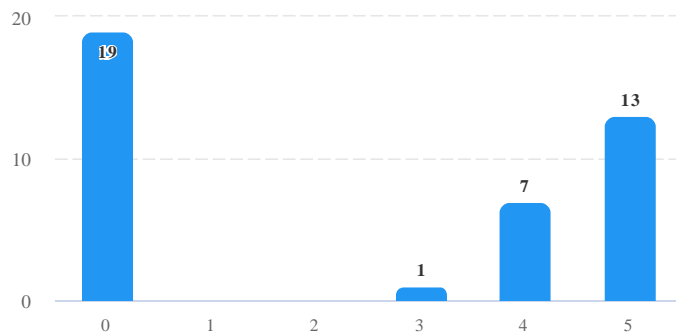


Average	4.85
Median	5.00
Mode	5
Std. Dev.	0.36
Variance	0.13

5

How responsive and helpful did you find your TA during office hours?
(Multi-Choice, Single Answer)

Value	Option	Total
0	Did not attend	19
1	Not at all helpful	0
2	Slightly helpful	0
3	Of average helpfulness	1
4	Better than average helpfulness	7
5	Extremely helpful	13



Average	4.57
Median	5.00
Mode	0
Std. Dev.	0.58
Variance	0.34

6 We know that how the professor conducts the course often influences what a TA is able to do in a course. Given the professor's role and the structure of this course, how would you evaluate your TA's performance?

 rating

(Instructor Multi-Choice)

 Travis Cao instructor

Value	Option	Total
0	No Answer	0
1	Poor	0
2	Fair	1
3	Average	0
4	Good	8
5	Excellent	31



Average	4.72
Median	5.00
Mode	5
Std. Dev.	0.59
Variance	0.35

II-TA Open-ended Questions

7 Please comment on any aspects of the section which you consider particularly satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Since this information will be given to the TA for improvement in his or her teaching, be as specific as you can in discussing and evaluating any phase of the section: presentation, responsiveness to questions, command of material, organization, mannerisms, teaching aids, etc.

(Text/Memo)

- You explain everything clearly. Great job! The discussion sections were really helpful.
- I liked how we just went through a few questions in more depth as opposed to doing the entire worksheet because I was really able to get a good understanding of the problems when we spent more time on them
- Travis is an excellent TA! He clearly understands course content and is very open to any student questions. I do wish that we went over more of the handouts instead of spending more time on reviewing material.
- Very good at explaining course content. I liked how he went through all problems as a class instead of making us fend for ourselves
- His knowledge and explaining of course information was shared clearly to students and was helpful in understanding.
- I'm glad we did a quick run through of the big topics we learned about in lecture. I'm also glad we went over all the worksheet questions in discussion so we could understand everything.
- He made a lot of the topics discussed in lecture more clear and understanding for us. I really benefited from attending discussion.
- He is organized when answering the questions. He is nice and patient.
- N/A
- I really enjoyed how we reviewed at the beginning of discussion and then went through the worksheet questions. It was very helpful for me.
- It was nice to have an introduction to certain topics or extra practice in discussion section.
- Travis was very prepared and effective during all sections. He responded well to questions on complicated questions
- I found it very helpful that Travis would first do a mini review before we started to do group work. This helped to refresh the content and made sure that everyone was on the same page. I also liked how Travis gave us a few minutes to work on one problem at a time as a group and then went over the problems. This was more useful to me than being overwhelmed by the entire worksheet/ not knowing if my group was doing the problems correctly.
- He was very knowledgeable in his leading of the discussions and he always answered any questions asked fully. He was very respectful and the discussions proved to help me learn the topics much better in application.
- very good
- I really enjoyed the little bits of review/simplification of lecture material that you would discuss in the beginning of section, as it gave the class a lot of structure. It was concise yet delved into the topics well and I credit a lot of my success in this course to that.
- Travis did an excellent job of recapping important material. Sometimes this did take a little too long and we had very little time to work on the worksheet.
- Travis I really enjoyed you as my TA. I am extremely grateful to have someone that knows as much as you and can easily explain it. I like how you go through the problem sets with us in section and how you teach. I had an amazing experience with you that blew away my friends experiences with their TAs- [REDACTED] (redact personal identifiable info)
- I thought that the use of the worksheets was difficult because we barely got any time to work on them collaboratively. The TA just basically taught another lecture (which I preferred more) however the worksheets seemed pointless.
- He was very direct in his language. He would define a concept, go through examples and emphasize key points. 10/10 .
- Travis is clearly very knowledgeable in economics. our sections were so informative and always ran incredibly smoothly. travis' teaching and explanations are very clear
- I think Travis was amazing. He explained things in better detail than the actual professor did. I learned more in section than I did in lecture and that is all thanks to Travis. He even went as far as reaching out to me when I bombed my exam, to set up a one on one meeting to go over what I got wrong and why.
- Travis was awesome and so helpful!!
- I thought that Travis did a great job explaining the lecture topics. Going over examples that I had seen before was helpful for me because it gave me more practice. Travis was also very organized on the chalkboard and it was easy to learn what he was trying to teach us
- Travis was so nice and knew how to put everything in understandable terms.
- Interesting
- We were a bit rushed sometimes towards the end of class. Forming groups was always unsuccessful and I felt I learned the material best when the TA demonstrated it on the board.
- Travis was one of the best TAs I have ever had in all of my classes that I have taken.
- The sections really helped clear up a lot of doubts on how the concepts we learned in lecture could be applied to class. They were straightforward and engaging.

went^{content} lecture really
 through more^{job} travis
 topics^{few} helpful^{glad} liked^{good}

8

What, if anything, limited your participation in section? (TA's style, other students, course structure, time of section, lack of preparation, etc.)

(Text/Memo)

- n/a
- Nothing, really. Economics is a little difficult for me, so I am sometimes a bit slow with understanding content.
- Nothing really
- Most of the time was explaining concepts so there was very little time to work on worksheets and try to do examples.
- I participated a lot, however, I'm not great at economics so I wouldn't participate if I didn't understand.
- Time of discussion section made my leaning very hard.
- Everything is good.
- N/A
- How quiet the room was!
- Nothing
- I think adding another section would be beneficial
- I don't feel as if anything limited my participation in discussion.
- The distance of my discussion and the time it was at always proved difficult for me to make the walk over, but that's completely laziness on my part.
- no
- Sometimes just because it was later in the day (4:30-5:30 PM) yet Travis always came in with good energy.
- Discussion felt a little short sometimes. I would have liked a little more time to review and do the worksheet
- Sometimes the lecture part of discussion got boring
- I think the lack of time we got to work on things limited my participation in section. I also feel like it would have been easier to work collaboratively if we were assigned groups or had a table setup that promoted conversation.
- The only limit would be time. I feel like we didn't have enough time to get through everything said in lecture.
- Well, after going online it sucked that we couldn't talk to other students anymore.
- I didn't like going because I wasn't learning anything
- The class was early in the morning so I was usually tired. I also felt like I didn't fully understand the concepts until the end of the discussion. I did participate though when I knew an answer.
- Due to the shift to online, I had a clash in the time of section and was unable to attend discussions live for the second half of the semester. It was more due to a personal conflict than the class though. Still it would have been nice to be able to ask more questions live in discussion.

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 participation live time work more
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 online class though

9

The Economics Department recognizes that nobody "signed up for" the emergency transition to remote instruction, and that students, TAs, and instructors were all doing the best they could during a difficult time. With that said, this semester gives us a useful opportunity to learn more about what works, and what doesn't work, in online instruction. With that in mind what did your TA do that you found particularly helpful in making the transition to remote instruction?

(Text/Memo)

- You did a really great job! The online discussions were well put together.
- the live sessions were good and the screensharing of writing down notes and problems was a good way to do things. unfortunately the time change meant my section ended up being pretty early in the morning, so i was extra appreciative that the sections were posted too
- Travis screenshared his iPad, or some tablet device, with students and wrote out problems on that. This was a great way to share content with students.
- The online classes were very helpful because you could get a response to a question right away if you had one
- Tried to be very helpful during this transition and have clear instructions.
- He emailed to check up on me after the second exam which was nice.
- He made the discussion available for either live or recorded watching, which was very beneficial.
- I don't like the online instruction because sometimes it's difficult to ask questions.
- Travis kept everything the same, including the worksheets and the lessons on an iPad which was very helpful. One of the best TAs!
- Having the voiceover over the video of his screen while he did the problems was really great!
- recording their discussions if a student could make that time.
- He still did the same thing, just over BB Collaborate. I found this useful for all of the things I pointed out that he did well above, because it was just like I was in my actual discussion.
- The discussions every week continuing, unlike some other courses, was extremely useful in learning how to apply and truly understand the topics we learned in lecture. Travis did a great job in this transition.
- clear drawings in discussions
- He recorded section off of his iPad while talking over it (so we could see him writing on the digital file quite clearly) which really was helpful in seeing the necessary thought process and I felt quite immersed in the material.
- Travis did a great job of conducting online discussions! His notes were very clear and easy to follow.
- Kept everything basically the same and the discussion recordings provided an opportunity to watch and a convenient time which was nice.
- I think given the circumstances discussion sections were transitioned to an online format well.
- He kept the usual schedule and was prompt. He was just as thorough as he would be in-person.
- He made his schedule very open and told us multiple times that he was free to talk whenever or help answer any questions. He also did his best to make sure that the sections were still just as good and informative as before.
- I liked that the discussion was recorded so they could be watched at a more convenient time.
- I think Travis' teaching in this was as good as it could have been
- Travis kept the procedure pretty much the same and still wrote things out on a virtual chalkboard as he was talking which was very helpful
- He made all the sections available in recordings which was super helpful.
- I think I've communicated maybe once with my TA
- The discussions were still good online and I feel like I actually got more out of them.
- I'm really thankful that we could view the discussions at other times. I was not able to attend live discussions due to timing conflicts but thanks to them being recorded I didn't miss out.

everythingbestavailable clear wrote pretty being notes writing

discussions

problems while useful talking quite recordings really

