

January 6, 2020

Dear Chris,

I am writing to thank you for your outstanding service as a Teaching Assistant in the 2019 summer course, PAI 755: Public Administration and Democracy. Your work was outstanding and I would be delighted to have you return as a TA in the summer of 2020.

I asked you to do a lot as a TA: (1) helping with course set up and preparation, (2) taking attendance in the large group session and in your discussion section; (3) grading the daily points to ponder assignments for your section; (4) developing and grading an exam question; (5) organizing and participating in the role play simulation; and (6) grading reflective writing assignments. You took on these and other responsibilities with aplomb. I appreciated your timeliness and expediency, as well as your upbeat attitude.

More important than these tasks, however, was your responsibility for leading and managing the case studies and other activities in your discussion section. As you will recall, I came to observe your teaching during the session on Citizen Influence in Public Administration.

Your style was fantastic. You had a great presence and really engaged well with the students. You were very comfortable in your role, had ownership of the class, and clearly had a strong rapport with the students. You are a natural teacher.

I appreciated that you opened with a recap of the session and with student questions that you answered clearly and concisely. You also did a very good case setup that helped the students identify the problems and challenges of the case. That said, it took more than 25 minutes for you to get the students into groups. In the future, you will need to work on time management and staying on track. Your facilitated discussion after the case was excellent. You posed sharp and challenging questions to the students and continually encouraged them to draw connections. Likewise, your wrap up of the session was stellar - you illustrated the relevance of the case by tying it back to the specific theme and to the broader course. Overall, you did a fantastic job in this session. I could really see your development as a teacher from last year to this year.

My positive assessment of your work as TA is buttressed by the student evaluations. As you know, students evaluated your work both quantitatively and qualitatively. Specifically, students were asked to assess you on a 1- to 5-point scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The table below shows the average response to the eight questions on the form. Your average score for all questions was strong, although some scores suggest areas where you could improve (e.g., facilitating discussions, helping students to reach their own conclusions). Nevertheless, students were clearly pleased with your performance.

Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs

Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and
Collaboration (PARCC)
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Syracuse, NY 13244

T 315.443.2367 <https://www.maxwell.syr.edu/parcc.aspx>

1. Was well prepared for the sessions?	4.80
2. Understood the materials?	4.67
3. Communicated the materials clearly and effectively?	4.50
4. Was effective at facilitating discussions?	3.93
5. Was effective in answering student questions?	4.14
6. Was responsive to student challenges and concerns?	4.00
7. Helped you come to your own conclusions about the topics?	3.80
8. Reinforced your understanding of the concepts and lessons from readings?	4.40

Their responses to the open-questions reinforce this conclusion. For example, here is a sample of responses to the question, “What did you like best about your TA’s teaching style?”

- Chris did a great job of guiding discussions and challenging ideas to help our session think more critically about the issues.
- He was willing to challenge people’s perspectives and promote deeper understanding.
- He was collaborative and could start good discussions and work everyone’s point into consideration.
- He was very good at challenging our views and playing devil’s advocate.
- The TA allowed for creativity and time to discuss concepts if students were unsure.

Students had several responses to the question, “What recommendations to you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?” A few consistent themes popped out. For example, several students had suggestions aimed at improving your listening skills:

- I would want him to answer and listen to questions more carefully. Not stop that in answers in between.
- Sometimes stop and listen or let an idea come to conclusion before trying to clarify.
- Be more aware and responsive to people’s question, concerns - more listening.

Others suggested being more self-aware when facilitating:

- Be less flippant. Sometimes we would get side tracked.
- Limit anecdotes and opinions - first day was dominated by TA in conversation.
- Sometimes could have allowed the section to respond to issues that other students raised/challenged their arguments. Sometimes he took over the discussion too much.

And still others, raised points about equal treatment of students:

- He could have done better at challenging everyone's equality. I felt that sometimes he challenged the views of those who didn't have the same view as him.
- I think there were times when Chris had some students dominate discussion - not consistently, but sometimes. He could offer wait time or purposely have others talk - which he did sometimes, to be fair.
- Must adjust tone when discussing with students to be more welcoming of differences of opinion. Very one-sided. Felt talked down to, many times.
- Help create opportunities for less dominant voices to speak in group discussions.
- Sometimes, class discussion would turn into a debate solely between the TA and select few. Additionally, there was a sense of dismissing a student's input without explaining why the point may have been misguided. I would have appreciated more feedback on out points to ponder too.

While the students gave important feedback that you should consider, their overall message was very positive. Moreover, I am sure that you will improve on these areas with experience and exposure to the classroom.

All in all, it is clear to me that you have natural teaching skills. I am confident that you are on your way to becoming a very strong, engaging, and stimulating professor. Again, it was a true pleasure to work with you in the course and I sincerely hope you will consider being a TA again in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tina Nabatchi". The signature is written in black ink and has a fluid, connected style.

Tina Nabatchi
Joseph A. Strasser Endowed Professor in Public Administration
Department of Public Administration and International Affairs
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs
Syracuse University

**Public Administration & Democracy
TA Evaluation - Summer 2019**

Who was your TA? RHEA CHRIS SAIED MATTIE

Please circle your response.

How strongly do you agree that your TA:

1. Was well prepared for the sessions?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree
2. Understood the materials?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree
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6. Was responsive to student challenges and concerns?	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree
7. Helped you come to your own conclusions about the topics?	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree
8. Reinforced your understanding of the concepts and lessons from readings?	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree

Please write brief responses. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. What did you like best about your TA's teaching style?

He was very blunt and to the point

2. What recommendations do you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?

I think he definitely challenged people but ultimately it did feel like there was a right answer that we should be getting to. It worked for me, but people on the other end of the

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the overall quality of the case discussions?

write the case on the board more. The time you did that was really helpful for me.

political spectrum might take issue

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Please write brief responses. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. What did you like best about your TA's teaching style?

*Very professional - facilitated discussion
- helped develop ideas*

2. What recommendations do you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?

- sometimes stop and listen or let an idea come to conclusion before trying to clarify

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the overall quality of the case discussions?

- more official solutions and reasoning after group work.

**Public Administration & Democracy
TA Evaluation - Summer 2019**

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Please write brief responses. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. What did you like best about your TA's teaching style?

That he was willing to challenge people's perspectives & promote deeper understanding.

2. What recommendations do you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?

Be a little less flippant. Sometimes we would get side tracked

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the overall quality of the case discussions?

You're good

**Public Administration & Democracy
TA Evaluation - Summer 2019**

Who was your TA? RHEA CHRIS SAIED MATTIE

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Please write brief responses. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. What did you like best about your TA's teaching style?

He was collaborative and could start good discussions and took everyone's point into consideration.

2. What recommendations do you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?

I would want him to answer and listen to questions more carefully. Not stop that in names in between.

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the overall quality of the case discussions?

Nothing as such.

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TA Evaluation - Summer 2019**

Who was your TA? RHEA CHRIS SAIED MATTIE

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Please write brief responses. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. What did you like best about your TA's teaching style?

He was very good at challenging our views & playing devils advocate.

2. What recommendations do you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?

He could have done better at challenging everyone's opinion equally. I felt that sometimes he challenged the views of those who didn't have the same view as him.

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the overall quality of the case discussions?

**Public Administration & Democracy
TA Evaluation - Summer 2019**

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7. Helped you come to your own conclusions about the topics?	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. Reinforced your understanding of the concepts and lessons from readings?	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Please write brief responses. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. What did you like best about your TA's teaching style?

◦ Provide challenging questions for ideas

2. What recommendations do you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?

◦ Limit anecdotes and opinions - (first day was ~~very~~ dominated by TA in conversation)

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the overall quality of the case discussions?

◦ The cases are so large and we have so little time to discuss them, perhaps we should use ~~one or two~~ one or two cases - preferably the ones we paid for - for class discussions,

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TA Evaluation - Summer 2019

Who was your TA? RHEA CHRIS SAIED MATTIE

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Please write brief responses. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. What did you like best about your TA's teaching style?

Direct and knowledgeable.

2. What recommendations do you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?

More Patient

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the overall quality of the case discussions?

*I think it's perfect right now
Maybe more role play will make it more interesting*

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Please write brief responses. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. What did you like best about your TA's teaching style?

Challenges our opinions and assist students to think outside of box or understand a concept from the opposite view

2. What recommendations do you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?

teaching styles, no!

Class Settings: Turn down the AC !!!!

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the overall quality of the case discussions?

**Public Administration & Democracy
TA Evaluation - Summer 2019**

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Please write brief responses. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. What did you like best about your TA's teaching style?

liked that he challenged people to think more critically about & better define their arguments.

2. What recommendations do you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?

Sometimes could have allowed the section to respond to issues that others hadn't raised / challenged their arguments. Sometimes he took over the discussion too much.

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the overall quality of the case discussions?

liked when we answered the basic/intro questions as a ^{full} group so the case discussions could be more focused on substantive issues in the small groups

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TA Evaluation - Summer 2019

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Please write brief responses. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. What did you like best about your TA's teaching style?

I enjoyed how Chris challenged our views and encouraged us to think about opposing opinions.

2. What recommendations do you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?

My recommendation would be to go deeper into classroom debates.

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the overall quality of the case discussions?

If we could have more than 1 day per case study we could go deeper into our discussions.

Public Administration & Democracy

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Please write brief responses. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. What did you like best about your TA's teaching style?

There was space + time to discuss - open to questions + debate

2. What recommendations do you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?

Be more aware + responsive to ~~the~~ people's questions, concerns - more listening

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the overall quality of the case discussions?

More awareness of people's willingness/ability to participate so people don't dominate the cases

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7. Helped you come to your own conclusions about the topics?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. Reinforced your understanding of the concepts and lessons from readings?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Please write brief responses. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. What did you like best about your TA's teaching style?

I appreciated that Chris challenged our viewpoints with the aim of strengthening our reasoning and understanding.

2. What recommendations do you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?

I think there were times when Chris had some students dominate discussion - not consistently, but sometimes. He could offer wait time or purposely have others talk - which he did sometimes, to be fair.

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the overall quality of the case discussions?

I think some cases had detail beyond what we had time to cover. Perhaps we could spend more time on a few of them.

Public Administration & Democracy
TA Evaluation - Summer 2019

Who was your TA? RHEA CHRIS SAIED MATTIE

Please circle your response.

How strongly do you agree that your TA:

1. Was well prepared for the sessions?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2. Understood the materials?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3. Communicated the materials clearly and effectively?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4. Was effective at facilitating discussions?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5. Was effective in answering student questions?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
6. Was responsive to student challenges and concerns?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. Helped you come to your own conclusions about the topics?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. Reinforced your understanding of the concepts and lessons from readings?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Please write brief responses. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. What did you like best about your TA's teaching style?

He was direct and challenged people to support their opinions.

2. What recommendations do you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?

Must adjust tone when discussing with students to be more welcoming of differences of opinion. Very one-sided.
 Felt talked down to many times.

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the overall quality of the case discussions?

More focus on reality rather than ideal

**Public Administration & Democracy
TA Evaluation - Summer 2019**

Who was your TA? RHEA CHRIS SAIED MATTIE

Please circle your response.

How strongly do you agree that your TA:

1. Was well prepared for the sessions?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree
2. Understood the materials?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree
3. Communicated the materials clearly and effectively?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree
4. Was effective at facilitating discussions?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree
5. Was effective in answering student questions?	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree
6. Was responsive to student challenges and concerns?	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree
7. Helped you come to your own conclusions about the topics?	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree
8. Reinforced your understanding of the concepts and lessons from readings?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Strongly Agree	<input type="radio"/> Agree	<input type="radio"/> Neutral	<input type="radio"/> Disagree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree

Please write brief responses. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. What did you like best about your TA's teaching style?

Chris did a great job of guiding discussions and challenging ideas to help our session think more critically about the issues

2. What recommendations do you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?

help create opportunities for less dominant voices to speak in group discussions

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the overall quality of the case discussions?

create safeguards against reinforcing biases and paternalistic approaches to solutions - the time constraints + subject matter leads to biased approaches (this is more of a class critique honestly)
↳ short-term

Public Administration & Democracy
TA Evaluation - Summer 2019

Who was your TA? RHEA CHRIS SAIED MATTIE

Please circle your response.

How strongly do you agree that your TA:

1. Was well prepared for the sessions?	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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Please write brief responses. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. What did you like best about your TA's teaching style?

The TA allowed for creativity and time to discuss concepts if students were unsure.

2. What recommendations do you have for your TA to improve her/his teaching style?

Sometimes, class discussion would turn into a debate solely between the TA and select few. Additionally, there was a sense of dismissing a student's input without explaining why the point may have been misguided. I would have appreciated more feedback on our parts to ponder too.

3. What changes would you recommend to improve the overall quality of the case discussions?

Don't be dismissive, Respect others' opinions, Incorporate more domestic cases (which I know is more so an overall class construction issue)