

# Calendar

## Saturday

■ Tree Davis seeks volunteers to prune trees from 9 a.m. to noon on Marden Street and Cowell Boulevard. Sign up at [treedavis.org/volunteer](http://treedavis.org/volunteer).

■ The Yolo County Master Gardeners present a free flower arranging class at the Davis United Methodist Church, 1620 Anderson Road, at 10 a.m. Master Gardeners will provide tips on creating table arrangements, and all flowers will be provided. Call 530-666-8737 or email [mgoyo@ucanr.edu](mailto:mgoyo@ucanr.edu).

■ The Yolo County Health & Human Services Agency presents a fruit-tree care class from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at the Hanna and Herbert Bauer Memorial Community Garden, 137 N. Cottonwood St. in Woodland. It is led by Master Gardener Bonnie Berman. Learn more by visiting [www.yolocounty.org/garden](http://www.yolocounty.org/garden). Pre-registration by today (Jan. 25) is required by contacting David Linebarger at 530-666-8429 or [david.linebarger@yolocounty.org](mailto:david.linebarger@yolocounty.org).

■ The Stephens Branch Library's Lunar New Year Celebration is at 1 p.m. Join the library for dancing, crafts and music. Check out the book display and bibliography.

■ Sudwerk Brewing Co. will donate 100 percent of its taproom proceeds today to the Natalie Corona Memorial Fund. The fundraiser is from 2 to 9 p.m. at The Dock, 2001 Second St. in Davis. Performances include one-man band Doc Tari from 3 to 6 p.m., and classic blues from Julie and the Jukes from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The musicians are donating their time. The food truck Street Cravings will be there and will donate a portion of its proceeds to the fundraiser.

## Sunday

■ Davis residents are invited to drop in to a Home Heating and Cooling "Make a Plan" home heating and cooling workshop from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Davis Senior Center, 646 A St. Email questions and other inquiries to [coolsolutions@cooldavis.org](mailto:coolsolutions@cooldavis.org).

■ The annual interfaith Celebration of Abraham is planned from 3 to 5:30 p.m. at St. James Memorial Center, 1275 B St. in Davis. People from Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith communities come together to foster relationships among congregations and the larger community.

■ Yolo Cabrillo Civic Club No. 26 will have its Portuguese Sweetbread and Linguica Breakfast at Tumulty Hall, 315 Walnut St., Woodland, from 7:30 a.m. to noon. Prices are \$8 for adults, \$5 for children under 12, kids under 2 are free.

■ NAMI Yolo, the local chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, will hold the next Family Support Group meeting from 1:30 to 3 p.m. in the Cafeteria Main Conference Room at Woodland Memorial Hospital, 1325 Cottonwood St. in Woodland. For information, call 530-756-8181 or visit [www.namiyolo.org](http://www.namiyolo.org).

■ The Yolo Master Gardeners present "Year Round Kitchen Gardening" at 2 p.m. in the Stephens Branch Library, 315 E. 14th St. For information, contact UC Cooperative Extension at 530-666-8737 or email [mgoyo@ucanr.edu](mailto:mgoyo@ucanr.edu).

■ The Stephens Branch Library presents a family movie, appropriate for all ages, with popcorn, at 2 p.m. at 315 E. 14th St. For the movie title, call 530-757-5596.

# Does it matter if a TA teaches?

What do Purdue University, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and University of Kansas all have in common? Great Division I Men's basketball, right? Yes, but besides that.

True, they are all large, public research institutions with great school spirit and a variety of strong academic programs, but there is something else they all have in common.

In fact, they are among the Top 10 of the U.S. News and World Report's list of universities where TAs (graduate teaching assistants) teach the most classes as the primary instructor. According to 2015 U.S. News data, at each of these schools "at least 18 percent of graduate teaching assistants taught courses in fall 2015."

Purdue tops this list with 26 percent of undergraduate courses having graduate TAs listed as primary instructors. See the complete list at <https://bit.ly/2Mx11MD> — and notice there are no University of California campuses at the top of this list.

Having a TA as a primary instructor or as a leader of a course section is a relatively common phenomenon at large, public universities, especially for the popular introductory courses. Think Econ 1.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 121,120 graduate teaching assistants employed at colleges, universities and professional schools in 2015. Why so many? Basically, it is cheaper. Public higher education institutions have felt the squeeze from reduced state funding for higher education.

Graduate students cost less than tenured faculty — plus, graduate students need financial support, so schools provide funding to help them pay their way through graduate school.

How to factor this into the college application and admissions process? Students applying to and/or attending these types of universities may



JENNIFER BORENSTEIN  
COLLEGE CORNER

have TAs in primary roles some of the time; and this scenario is less likely to occur at smaller liberal arts colleges that have low student-to-faculty ratios and few, if any, graduate students.

So, is this important? The answer is — wait for it — it depends.

Whether this is a deciding factor in terms of the potential for student success depends on the student and the TA. There are two main issues to unpack here.

First is the issue of building a relationship with a professor. As Frank Bruni points out in his op-ed "How to Get the Most Out of College" (<https://nyti.ms/2OMLR7h>), building relationships with a professor can help not only to open doors to a host of opportunities from internships to research in a lab to publishing, but it can also help focus and inspire a student toward realizing goals.

Does having a TA mean forfeiting this chance with a professor? Maybe for that course. But, the TA may be a valuable relationship to cultivate as well.

Regardless, it is often up to the student to take advantage of and build these relationships. Schools with a large percentage of TAs as primary instructors may not be a good breeding ground for such "mentor" type relationships.

Often, but not always, it could be hard to get a letter of recommendation from a professor for graduate school or connect with labs and find undergraduate research opportunities.

The second issue is what is the best type of classroom learning environment for the student — professor or TA? This is a tough one because it

is again dependent on the individual student and the individual TA.

Many TAs are stellar instructors who have enthusiasm for their field and are serious about being a good teacher. On the other hand, they do not have an equivalent level of experience as professors in teaching and researching.

Nor do they have the same network of associates. In addition, since many graduate students are from other countries (perhaps even more so than professors) language barriers may present a challenge to effective teaching.

How do you know if this will be an issue for you? Bottom line: do research online and/or ask on tours the following questions:

1. Which classes in which departments are most often taught by graduate students? (It is most likely the big introductory courses which is, ironically, precisely when students may need the most support.)

2. What are language requirements for graduate student instructors?

3. Is there a way to know which TAs will be leading and/or supporting a course before enrolling?

4. May I observe a section or a course taught by a TA?

To recap, large public universities often use TAs to teach courses and/or support professors by teaching a section of the course. If you are interested in attending universities where this is likely to occur, do your homework to better understand what the classroom experience will be like.

Then, as always, take into consideration this factor along with the others that are critical to you (cost, location, weather, internships, etc.) when putting together your college list. And, voila, you are on your way to finding the right college for you!

— Jennifer Borenstein is an independent college adviser in Davis and owner of The Right College For You. Her column is published monthly. Reach her at [jenniferborenstein@therightcollegeforyou.org](mailto:jenniferborenstein@therightcollegeforyou.org), or visit [www.therightcollegeforyou.org](http://www.therightcollegeforyou.org).

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# PROFILE

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## EVENT CALENDAR FEBRUARY

**Saturday, February 2nd**  
Installation Gala  
"Sold Out Show"

**Thursday, February 18th**  
Chamber Closed

**Tuesday, February 26th**  
Business over  
Breakfast Workshop  
9:00 am – 10:30 am  
Location: Chamber Office

**Thursday, February 28th**  
New Year New You  
Davis NEXT!  
5:00 pm – 6:30 pm  
Location: El Macero  
Country Club

View all Chamber events online at [www.DavisChamber.com](http://www.DavisChamber.com)



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## Greetings from Chamber Ambassadors!

Together we're your guide to local businesses and our community. Ask us how we can help you.



<b>Aaron Wedra</b> Smartz Graphics 530-574-7306	<b>Amanda Mason</b> Lyon Real Estate 707-927-6291	<b>Raul Zamora</b> Z1 Real Estate & Property Management 530-400-9102	<b>Katie Curran</b> Dignity Health 530-669-5688	<b>Jill Moss</b> Soroplist International of Greater Davis 916-202-5455	<b>Danae Kelley</b> RE/MAX Gold 530-383-1910	<b>Julio Paniagua</b> Stitchet 530-746-1541	<b>Jessica Heiser</b> Royal Guest Hotels 530-554-5043	<b>Bianca Filak</b> First Northern Bank 530-758-7500	<b>Shawna Judkins</b> Impact Financial Advisors 530-746-0337	<b>Meredith Roberts</b> Sierra Energy 530-512-0478	<b>Paul Romo</b> Impact Financial Advisors 530-746-0336	<b>Claire Tauzer</b> Apiaries/Sola Bee Farms 530-771-7828
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