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Abbreviated Statement of Educational Philosophy: Advising & Teaching

My early and challenging academic experiences serve as an invaluable framework that better enables me to understand and empathize with a diverse range of students. My lived experiences of being a first-generation college student with limited family support present the main ideals that are the backbone of my education philosophy. These experiences also strongly guide the ways in which I approach advising and teaching and ground my commitment to developmental and universal design models of teaching and advising.

The use of a wide range of advising and teaching techniques and evaluation methods are essential to engaging students of diverse backgrounds. In today's academic climate the notion of the "traditional" student is virtually obsolete. What we once understood as a "standard" type of student is replaced by a student body comprised of individuals of all types of diversity. The reality that students are unique individuals provides many opportunities as well as challenges that can be overcome with the use of developmental and universal design models of advising and teaching.

I am inspired by Margaret King's (2005) eloquent summation of developmental academic advising as:

...both a process and an orientation. It reflects the idea of movement and progression. It goes beyond simply giving information or signing a form. [. . .] To advise from a developmental perspective is to view students at work on life tasks in the context of their whole life settings, including the college experience" [...]. Developmental academic advising recognizes the importance of interactions between the student and the campus environment, it focuses on the whole person, and it works with the student at that person's own life stage of development" (http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/clearinghouse/advisingissues/dev_adv.htm).

In my teaching, I am equally committed to creating a community of learners. Cooperative learning allows students to build interpersonal and working relationships, while actively engaging with course material. With so many students who work and maintain a full-range of responsibilities outside of schooling, students face difficulty in coordinating schedules to complete projects. Instructional technology serves as another medium to communicate with students, build community, and provide supplemental instruction. An example is providing the

opportunity for students to have their own group chat room and dedicated discussion board that offers a different way for students to connect with each other.

Throughout my advising and teaching I treat students as individuals. I learn students' names quickly, get them involved, and provide flexible office hours. This enables me to better interact with students on a personal level, and to accommodate their individual learning styles. Additionally, to treat students as valuable human beings makes possible the formation of a cohesive (and productive) personal relationship and classroom climate.

I also view the role of educator as extending beyond the confines of my office, and to include institutional involvement at multiple levels. My immediate responsibility is to prepare students to be self-sufficient and life-long learners. At the same time, the advising interactions and courses I teach are only two steps in the student's path towards graduation. My obligation is to contribute and remain attentive to issues pertaining to student services and retention. This is especially important when addressing the needs of underrepresented and underserved students. Some of my most rewarding teaching moments occur outside my office and classroom context. In particular, I find my work with the Leadership Certificate Program at the University of Minnesota (and other work with diverse student populations, as referenced on my c.v.) empowers me to connect with students in a different way which ultimately enhances their chances of personal and professional success.

Educational efficacy is defined by educators' belief in ourselves and our students, and is correlated with higher student achievement. To maintain educational efficacy, I view collaboration with colleagues and continued professional development as vital. The exchange of ideas and networking with colleagues is a "win-win" situation; both parties benefit, and contribute to a positive institutional climate. As a teaching intern, I experienced how strategic collaboration with professional colleagues representing library, student counseling, and technology services enriched student learning and informed students of available services. High expectations for students create a productive learning environment for all.

The three ideals discussed above are the keys to effective advising, teaching, and learning. In order to be an effective educator for students of ALL backgrounds, we must use a wide range of teaching and advising techniques that are grounded in developmental and universal design models; acknowledge the role of advisor/teacher extends beyond the office/classroom; and, realize the importance of educational efficacy and peer collaboration.