

**Statements of Teaching Philosophy
by 2005 Recipients**



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Background

I have had many different business careers. I have had the opportunity to be an entrepreneur, a research analyst on the Istanbul Stock Exchange in Turkey, a management consultant, and a Vice President of Marketing at the Transportation Association of Canada. I have thoroughly enjoyed my work and the myriad of experiences it has brought into my life. However, when asked whether I loved my job, like most people, I smiled politely and said, “You love your family, you love activity ‘X’ or ‘Y’; you don’t love your job”. I was not unhappy, nor was I unfulfilled; I really did enjoy my work and felt no need to love it.

After many years working in the private and public sectors, I received an opportunity to teach marketing on a part-time basis at the University of Ottawa. I thoroughly enjoyed this experience. I was successful enough in the classroom to be invited back to teach one evening class, every semester at the University. I taught subjects ranging from marketing, to international business, to strategy.

As my professional life progressed along this interesting rhythm of work and teaching, many of my friends and family members observed that I was spending more of my free time preparing for the classes I was teaching. Although my free time was limited, that was not an adequate explanation. The emerging reality was that I was falling in love with my part time job. Any time I could find to spend improving the content of my courses, massaging how I was going to communicate it to the students, or coaching my students do improve their understanding of business, was time that I was willing to spend generously. Spending time in these ways allowed me to feel truly fulfilled. Reality set in; it was time to change my life. Six years later, I had completed my Ph.D. at the Richard Ivey School of Business in Canada. Subsequently, I became a tenure-track, Assistant Professor of Strategic Management at The Graziadio School of Business and Management at Pepperdine University. Here I am four years later, bestowed with the honor of sharing my teaching philosophy for the Howard A. White award for teaching excellence. It is funny how good things come to those who are in love

The Three C’s

Teaching strategic management is fascinating because not only is the professor responsible for communicating relevant and up-to-date curriculum, but he/she is also charged with helping students change their thinking and behavior. When I teach management, my primary goal is to foster the development of good managers. Although good managers must have strong technical skills they must also have the ability to think and behave strategically, i.e. to manage tensions, to direct under grave uncertainty, to be innovative and creative, to have the courage to express integrity in decision making, to listen, to not be afraid to act and to enact. These key elements of good management form the foundation of my classes. To enable students to experience and learn these practical and relevant aspects of strategic management, I focus on the three Cs of teaching excellence: Curriculum, Communication, and Coaching.

Curriculum

My primary intention as a strategic management professor is to shape managers to have a broad understanding of management principles. What is often taught to management students can be summarized in what we learned about management almost 50 years ago from individuals such as Drucker (1954) and Cyert and March (1963). Students who have been educated under the traditional approach are predisposed to believing that a good manager is a 'rational thinker' with 'hard' skills. He/she is able to assess the external environment, identify resources and capabilities within a company, compare and contrast what is going on inside with what is going on outside the organization, and have some notion of managing change, turnaround, diversification, internationalization etc. They would be less likely to suggest that being a good manager is also about being able to intuit, venture, champion, develop, foster, exchange, share, cooperate, network, motivate, support, advocate, collaborate, and affiliate. However, the reality of good management is that it relies as much on technical skills as on dynamic strategic behavior. Given that my personal research interests are related to areas such as improvisation, decision-making, ethical management, cooperative ventures, exchange, and managerial effectiveness, I regularly bring new and exciting research findings about technical skills and strategic behaviors into the classroom. This creates a stimulating learning environment for students who I then challenge to layer new research findings against their assumptions about what is good management.

Communication

I see my job as a professor of strategic management to serve as a bridge between theory and practice. Currently, the most dominant form of instruction to help build this bridge is the Harvard Case Method. I too rely heavily on real business cases to communicate to my students the key tenets of the bridge between strategy theory and practice. Cases are an excellent way to put students in the shoes of the key decision-maker, to allow students to think about real management problems, and to foster creative and critical thinking about technical and behavioral issues. Although I use cases to teach management and strategy, I am keenly aware of their limitations. The case method is often a very systematic process, which leaves students with the impression that management is a controlled, sequential, and technical process. Although, many educators are careful to point out that the case method is simply a form of pedagogy that does not resemble real strategic management; its consistent use encourages new managers to adopt a case framework approach to management. This framework stresses the existence of a "right" course of action; an unrealistic ideal in the real world that can often lead to naïve and erroneous decision-making.

To avoid this negative externality inherent in the use of the case method, I augment my instruction in the classroom in three distinct ways. First, I select cases that are real company cases about issues that are current and timely. This allows my students and me to invoke real-time information about competition and industry trends. I select cases with direct quotes from officers inside the company to put students directly into the mindset of the management. I select cases about companies that have made significant newsworthy decisions, to afford students access to rich publicly available information against which to examine their own ideas and recommendations. Finally, I only select cases with multiple themes, specific decision points and an advanced level of complexity to force students to think about realistic and practical solutions that focus on the integration of various parts of their MBA education. For each business decision in the case, I attempt to facilitate a discussion that helps students think about ethical implications and how the manager in question might think about balancing his/her own moral compass with the pursuit of profits.

The second approach I use in the classroom to augment the traditional case method is the use of recent and relevant business news. As discussions about the case and the various decisions facing managers evolve in the classroom, I enhance the evolution of the discussion with examples literally as recently as “yesterday” from companies and senior managers that are currently facing similar issues. This allows students to see the relevance of the principals of strategic management while showing them how theory can expand our understanding of current business practice.

The third approach I use in the classroom to augment the traditional case method is the use of experiential exercises. Although cases offer an opportunity to discuss managerial decision making, their use is reminiscent of the traditional discrepancy between, on the one hand, *espoused theories of action* and, on the other hand, *theories in use* that actually govern decision-making. The best way to understand a manager’s *theory in use* is via direct observation. This poses an interesting challenge for students within the confines of a classroom. However, by using exercises that allow students to experience, first-hand, the skills, challenges, and outcomes associated with real-life management, we can tap into managerial theories of use. One such series of powerful experiential exercises is demonstrated in the management development tool entitled “Improvise to Innovate” (Crossan, 1997). This is a video training program that puts students through a variety of experiential exercises related to interpreting the environment strategically, implementing strategy via teams, understanding the role of personal action in strategy, leading strategic change, and finally crafting and developing strategy. This exercise provides an excellent platform from which to discuss the crucial differences between theory and action in managerial work.

Coaching

Coaching is a fundamental theme that underpins my interaction with students. It is my goal in every class to develop a personal relationship with each student. The bulk of my students at Pepperdine pursue their MBA’s on a part-time basis; they work full-time. Most of my students are mid-level managers working in medium to large sized companies. A smaller number of my students either are entrepreneurs, members of the senior management team at their company or have only been working for a few years. The opportunity for them to live the intersection between theory and practice is real-time. It is common for my students to approach me with real life problems ranging from complex strategic planning and implementation issues, issues regarding teamwork in the workplace, to personal issues about remuneration, career development, and advancement. It is my belief and conviction that most of what my students really learn in the classroom is personalized and internalized during these one-on-one coaching discussions. As a result, I strive to make myself available to my students as much as possible. I pledge to my students to respond to 90% of their emails within the first few hours after receipt. I am available for one-on-one discussions about strategy or related topics at their convenience; I provide them with my cell phone number and allow them to call me anytime between 10am to 12pm in the evening. I am available for in-person discussions for up to 2 hours before and after class. It is common for me to be talking to students at 11:30pm in the courtyard, outside the building of one of the school’s satellite centers after a 10pm class. It is my belief that the learning relationship between a student and his/her teacher is like any other personal relationship, in that it is a function of reciprocity. It has been my experience that the more you give to someone you care about, the more he/she is willing to give back; the same applies to the learning relationship. Moreover, this give and take process is especially important in inspiring those students that are a little harder to motivate. On countless occasions, I have had students who have said to me, “Dr. Kachra, I was ready to check out of the MBA program – strategy was my last course – and I just wanted to shuffle through it, without making a great deal of

effort. However, after the very first class with you, I was inspired to work harder than I have ever worked before”.

Statements as generous as these and others more critical are what has helped me develop my teaching philosophy: Cutting edge CURRICULUM, COMMUNICATED in a way that effectively bridges theory and practice, in an environment that stresses COACHING and relationship building. Today, when friends and family ask me whether I love what I do, I smile politely and say, “I couldn’t love anything more; I am truly blessed”.

Kendra S. Killpatrick
Associate Professor of Mathematics
Seaver College

As I reflect on the blessings that my vocation as a math professor at Pepperdine has brought to my life, I am struck by the many facets that make up this profession: teacher, professional scholar, writer (of grant proposals, state education standards documents, assessment items), mentor, research mathematician, advisor, friend, and colleague. The skills required to be effective at each of these different facets are so closely interwoven that it is difficult to single out those that are important for the “teacher” facet. Rather, the following traits seem to be vital to all facets and together make one an effective professor:

- Demonstrates a passion for the subject and for teaching, constantly seeking out new ways to present ideas and engage students in the learning process.
- Maintains the highest academic standards and expectations of student coursework, challenging students to achieve excellence in their academic work.
- Remains aware of the current research literature in the pedagogy of teaching her subject and attempts to implement effective pedagogical techniques into their classes on a daily basis.
- Encourages and inspires students of all ability levels, seeking out students for mentoring and advising.
- Engages in research and scholarship, serving as a role model of a well-rounded professional academic for students, and participates in the greater academic community through participation in local and national conferences.

TRAIT 1: Demonstrates a passion for the subject and for teaching, constantly seeking out new ways to present ideas and engage students in the learning process.

I love mathematics and try to share my passion and enthusiasm for the subject with my students each day. Each week I like to share either articles I have read in the newspaper, websites of interest, news items, puzzles, interesting theorems, anecdotes about famous mathematicians or unsolved problems with my students to pique their interest in math.

I try to improve a course each time I have taught it and work each semester to bring new methods of teaching to my lessons. Prior to introducing a new curriculum to Math 102 (our general education course for non-majors) I attended a four-day seminar by the authors of the new textbook to learn how to teach the different and exciting curriculum they had developed. When I taught the course I kept a teaching journal during the first semester to record my impressions of what went well and what didn't in each lesson and used that to make key changes the following semester. A quality professor should strive to keep courses exciting and fresh from year to year.

TRAIT 2: Maintains the highest academic standards and expectations of student coursework, challenging students to achieve excellence in their academic work.

I firmly believe in maintaining high expectations of my students and in combating grade inflation by aiming to have an average course GPA between 2.5 and 2.8. I have been pleased to find that in the past few semesters my course evaluations have revealed high student evaluation marks while my average course GPA's remain in the 2.5-2.8 range. While I believe in challenging students in each of my courses, I also believe in providing students with all of the tools that they need to succeed, given that they are willing to work hard. I try to set office hours at effective times when many students can attend, even holding office hours on Sunday afternoons in the cafeteria during some semesters so that students whose work, class or athletic schedules conflict during the week can receive help.

I do not believe that math classes should simply consist of memorizing formulas and equations and then regurgitating those for exams. I want to develop in my students a deep and conceptual understanding of mathematical ideas. While I agree that skill development is important, the ability to plug numbers into equations and formulas will not give a student the tools they need to succeed either in future classes or in a real life job situation. Students who have simply memorized formulas and equations can do little more than a calculator or a computer program like Mathematica. Research shows that students who have genuinely gained conceptual understanding from a class retain their skills longer and are able to apply what they learned to future classes and to new problems that may arise in different situations.

TRAIT 3: Remains aware of the current research literature in the pedagogy of teaching her subject and attempts to implement effective pedagogical techniques into classes on a daily basis.

Research in mathematics education shows that students learn material at a deeper level and retain what they have learned longer if they are an active participant in the development of concepts and mathematical ideas. Merely lecturing has been proven in many research studies to be a relatively ineffective way to teach mathematics. I try very hard to have my students actively involved in solving problems or working on a mathematical activity every day in class, whether they are in an introductory Math 102 class or whether they are in a senior level theoretical mathematics course.

In Math 102 classes the students do not have any days during the semester where I simply lecture about material and they take notes. Each day the students are involved in a problem of some sort with those who sit at their table and are asked to come up with a solution or to conjecture about what they think can mathematically happen and why. Students are initially reluctant to share their

thoughts with others but develop confidence throughout the semester and retain the ideas longer than through a lecture format.

Even in upper division theoretical classes where students are learning many definitions and seeing new theorems for the first time, I believe it is important for students to be asked to work on problems in class and to participate in active problem solving. Students will learn basic mathematical definitions better if they are immediately asked to work with those definitions and prove other problems using those definitions than if they simply take notes on the definition and move on to taking notes on a theorem. I often have students in upper division courses present proofs and solutions on the boards for the rest of the class so that they gain experience in sharing their knowledge with others. Effective group work is possible at all levels of the mathematics curriculum.

TRAIT 4: Encourages and inspires students of all ability levels, seeking out students for mentoring and advising.

I believe it is important for any professor to build meaningful and lasting relationships with students. To be an effective teacher, role model, encourager, advisor, and mentor it is crucial to me that I truly get to know my students. I genuinely enjoy learning about my students' lives outside of the classroom and try to use that knowledge to encourage them to seek out opportunities in mathematics that they may not have thought about, such as summer research opportunities, special conferences for undergraduates or women, or summer internship programs. In addition, as a professor at a Christian university, it is important to me that I have many different opportunities to share my faith with my students and for them to have a chance to share their faith and their stories with me.

I think it is important for students to have the opportunity to participate in undergraduate research and seek out students to work with me during either the summer or the school year. I believe that students of all abilities can have an effective undergraduate research experience and have worked with students ranging from future Fulbright scholars to students who are barely maintaining the requisite C average in their math classes. Through working on unsolved mathematics problems and by going through the process of developing and giving a talk at a regional or national conference, these students learn more about the process of doing original mathematics than they can in a structured classroom environment.

TRAIT 5: Engages in research and scholarship, serving as a role model of a well-rounded professional academic for students, and participates in the greater academic community through participation in local and national conferences.

For the upper division math classes with students who are math majors, it is important to me to give students some idea of what higher-level mathematics is about and to demonstrate to students what it means to be a professional mathematician. In its purest form, mathematics is a creative endeavor that challenges mathematicians to hypothesize, conjecture and speculate about possibilities. I want my students to begin to experience this creative side of mathematics, both in my classes and through individual student research. I try to teach students how to use their intuition to make conjectures and then how to seek out ways to prove those conjectures. Approaching math in this manner

teaches students to have confidence in their intuition and to develop a willingness to be totally wrong! This is truly what mathematics is all about. I often ask students questions like, “What do you think is true in this case?”, “What do you want to be true in a case like this?”, “How could you prove or disprove your conjecture?”, “Why do you think your conjecture is true?” I ask students to come to the board on a regular basis to work through homework problems or problems we work on in class. I try to demonstrate weekly an interesting unsolved problem to my upper division students to interest them in different areas of math.

As the advisor of the both the math club and the math honor society (Pi Mu Epsilon), I have taken many students to both regional and national math conferences. At these conferences, students are given the chance to meet students from all around the United States who have been doing their own undergraduate research and who share many of the same interests. By giving a poster or a talk, and by seeing me do the same, the students learn how the mathematics community shares results and works together to solve difficult problems. Students are also encouraged to become involved in discussions about the larger policy issues facing both the mathematics and the mathematics education professional communities.

Douglas W. Kmiec
Caruso Family Chair Professor
School of Law

All teaching *is* an act of faith.

As teachers, we often speak of our teaching life as vocation. And it is appropriate to do so. But especially here at Pepperdine, that vocation or calling necessarily implies One who calls.

The God of heaven and earth invites us to seek our destiny and He holds out a very positive destination for us. And remarkably, the invitation is lovingly and continually extended. Every academic year opens a new account that works in a miraculous way. We come to the work table with considerable study and we are given each year, each semester even, a new and reasonably eager audience.

What a blessing that is.

Profound religious instruction admonishes that man is not to lose his Divine personality in work, but find it – “work is for man, man is not for work,” and yet we know in the external world, few can have the joy of intellectual study, of fine art, of new experimental and empirical challenge that we as teachers savor.

So to be considered for a prestigious Award for savoring what few others outside the university are permitted to enjoy is remarkable indeed.

Any teaching philosophy worth its salt must be anchored in enthusiasm. The word “enthusiasm,” derived as it is from the Greek *en theos* or “God in us,” perfectly captures for me what it is I hope to share with my students:

to see God’s hand in all His works; including the great work of placing us here – at this moment – in this splendid place

and

to make the lives of others, as best we can, truly better by following the leading spirit of God in us and helping others grasp their own specialized aptitudes.

At my best moments, as this philosophy of enthusiasm takes hold, teaching is far more than just the doing – the class preparation, the exposition, the writing – it is indeed being, itself.

Some time back, I had the privilege of sharing a brief reflection with a few members of the Seaver faculty on a model teacher for me -- St. Thomas More. I reflected as to how More (as retold by Sir Robert Bolt) was pestered repeatedly by Master Richard Rich, a young man from Cambridge, for a public position.

More advised his young acolyte “to be a teacher,” and in the best sense of Socratic dialogue (which we like a lot in the law school) proceeds to lead this young man toward a genuine insight into his true self.

More employed: not lecture, not memorization, but a conversation in which the student was brought round, bit by bit, to grasp the nettle of a topic – to have the proverbial moment of understanding.

It is, I confess, the very same method I seek to employ in classroom, corridor, and email with as many students as my day allows.

It has been, with God’s blessing, reasonably successful.

“Why teach and who would know?” asks More. “Why you, your pupils, your friends, God. Not a bad public, that.”

Indeed, not a bad public at all.

Gordon Lloyd
Professor
School Of Public Policy

Three central features separate good teaching from lousy teaching: the teacher, regardless of whether the student is in high school or college or completely outside of the classroom environment, must demonstrate on a day to day basis 1) a passionate love of learning, 2) a willingness to take risks, and 3) combine these features of excitement and entrepreneurship in a natural as opposed to a contrived way. Good teaching involves thinking on your feet, resisting the demand for the “bottom line,” and realizing that teaching is more of an art than it is a science. It’s about bringing your own character to the activity, leaving your problems at the door, and conducting your self as if there is nothing more important in the world than what is taking place right now.

One of the finest tests of good teaching is whether or not the teacher himself has learnt something from the lecture/seminar. Similarly, one of the surest tests as to when “to hang it up” is when you, the teacher, know you aren’t really part of the learning enterprise anymore. And that in turn is the first sign that you have lost a step because you don’t care erotically anymore; you know this destructive sign of apathy way before the students begin to suspect that it is time for you to hang it up.

To talk about a philosophy of teaching is actually to talk about why one should love to assist people to become wiser. Put that way, there is a certain obviousness to the craft. But one cannot do a very good job of exercising this craft in the service of others, unless one realizes that good teaching is like a rewarding conversation, a sort of “unrehearsed journey,” between a master craftsman, or intelligent guide, who takes pride in his craft, and eager apprentices who want to learn to become wiser.

But all too often, the apprentice is not as eager as you would wish, and this seems to become more acute the “younger” the students get and the “older” you get. Instructors today don’t receive the automatic respect that they did in the past; today the teacher must earn the respect of the student! So the teacher must first respect himself and then constantly be aware of his responsibility to provide an atmosphere where eagerness is fostered. And the educator has to also realize that it is very difficult to provide a textbook answer to the question, “How do you encourage eagerness?”

So teaching and learning is a journey where a) raising questions is more important than providing answers, b) pursuing slight digressions from the main road are just as important as sticking strictly to the material, and c) the participants not only bring their mouth, but also their ears, eyes, and heart to the conversation. I am convinced that a critical breakthrough takes place in the educational project when A) original material is substituted for the text book, B) the teacher leaves his notes behind and speaks directly to the students, and C) students realize that, like a good parent, a good teacher is one who prepares them for a life of self-reliance and communal responsibility.

Now all this is a pretty tall order, and thus a philosophy of teaching should not only talk about the “mission” and the “ideal,” but also the practical and contextual dimensions in which the craft is

exercised. To that end, I wish to tell two stories from my formative life in Trinidad and Tobago in the then British West Indies.

1) I grew up in an oil field camp in Trinidad, and when I turned thirteen, in 1955, my father took me to the local, and only, tailor shop in the nearby “town.” “Mr. Gabe,” said my dad, “I want you to make a suit for my son now that he is a teenager. How much will it cost?” Without hesitation, the elderly West Indian, hands on hips, replied, “How much you want to pay? I can make him a \$10 suit, or a \$50 suit, or a \$100 suit. What it is dat you want man?” I have always remembered Joe Gabe’s response and applied it to the craft of teaching: one needs to tailor the ideal to fit the reality of the situation. You do the best you can with what you have and get on with the task at hand. One may want to teach seminars with 15 top notch graduate students, or even 15 top flight world scholars—both of which I have done several times—but the real test of your craft is to labor in the fields of the young and struggling huddled together in a room holding 100 people and provide them with the best that you can do. I have done that too.

2) I wanted to be a spin bowler for the Trinidad national cricket team and, to that end, I would practice by my self in the backyard every day. But my mother knew the realities of the sports world; very few people ever make it to the world stage in sports. And she also knew that I was receiving a first class private classical education courtesy of the Texaco oil company. So she would sit at one side of the living room and I would sit at the other side. I would take a tennis ball and bounce it to her putting a different finger spin on it each time. But every time I sent the ball to her, I would have to go through the tenses of a Latin verb. Thus, with my first release of the ball, I would say, “amo,” and then “amas” etc until the exercise was over. The lesson is clear: good teachers work with the students’s interests and encourage them to take themselves to higher levels and, like sports, learning entails practice, practice, practice. Today, I am a college teacher and not a spin bowler.

Priscilla MacRae
Professor of Sports Medicine
Frank R. Seaver Professor of Natural Science
Seaver College

What I present here is my vision of teaching at the university level including the goals for my students, methods I used to help students achieve these goals, how I measure the effectiveness of my teaching, what I do to continue to grow as a teacher, and my rationale for teaching. During my 27 years of collegiate teaching I have become increasingly aware of the interplay between the processes of teaching and learning. I cannot teach unless I am first and foremost a learner – a lifelong learner. This in turn is my major goal for my students – that they will love learning, will be individuals who ask thought-provoking questions, who seek truth, and who can articulate and fulfill their vocation. Another goal for my students is that they master the content of the course and are able to explain essential concepts, whether it is identifying the structure and function of the human body, describing research methods in the exercise sciences, or explaining how the nervous system

controls motor function and how physical activity affects the nervous system. My students are encouraged to think critically, develop questions and hypotheses to answer these questions, and be problem-solvers, able to accurately define problems and propose testable solutions. They participate actively in the teaching-learning process, not only with me, but also with their fellow students in class, in laboratory exercises, and in out-of-class interactions (study sessions and group work). In order to be active participants, the students are expected to come to class prepared, with readings and assignments completed before class, so they can take an active part in class discussions. A final goal for my students is that the knowledge and skills they acquire in my classes will prepare them to contribute to and effectively function in society and in all aspects of their lives.

I help students reach these goals by being knowledgeable and passionate about my content area, organized, and a guide and mentor to my students. I hope that I am perceived as an up-to-date expert in sports medicine/exercise science who has a passion about the material that I teach. I continue to be in awe of God and how “fearfully and wonderfully made” the human body is and I hope to instill this awe in my students. I hope that I am perceived as an organized teacher who clearly describes goals, objectives, and assessments that will be used to evaluate student learning in my course syllabi. I also hope that my students perceive that I am available outside of the classroom as I keep my office hours and encourage them to see me about any of their concerns. Having students into my home each semester for a meal is one of my favorite activities and appears to be meaningful to my students, particularly those far from home. I also hope that it makes me more approachable as a professor because the students interact with my family and see me in my home setting.

I use a variety of teaching methods including problem-based learning, individual and group projects/presentations, field trips, lecture, and laboratory experiments. Since one of the main objectives in SPME110, Introduction to the Exercise Sciences, is to develop a personal mission statement, the students complete individual and groups exercises that culminate in the development of a one sentence personal mission statement. In order to encourage a sense of community among the students and the Malibu community, students are given the option of completing a service learning project in which they teach sports skills at the local elementary school, lead exercise classes at a senior center, or referee for the local youth soccer association. For the last 8 years, I have organized a one day retreat for all freshman sports medicine majors, in which they hear about vocation/calling from sports medicine alumni, get to know the professors and students in the major in a relaxed setting, and complete a four-year plan where they specify the courses they will take each semester until graduation.

Most of the courses that I teach involve laboratory experiences which are particularly important since there it has been stated that students remember 10% of what they hear, 20% of what they see and 70% of what they do! The human anatomy laboratories require students to see and touch models of the body and to perform dissections of animal parts and human cadavers. In order to improve critical thinking and scientific writing skills, students in my senior level motor behavior course conduct laboratory experiments that involve the development of a research question and hypothesis, data collection and analysis, and writing up the findings in a form that could be published. The first few laboratory reports are critiqued by a fellow student and then by me based on objective assessment criteria. The students then take this written feedback and make changes in their final report attaching a short summary of how they used the feedback to improve the paper. In addition to the required laboratory experiences, some students enjoy the extra challenge of

conducting research with me. These research projects have resulted in over 20 co-authored publications and abstracts with 30 different students from Pepperdine.

How do I measure the effectiveness of my teaching on student learning? I use the traditional ways of measuring student learning by assessing performance on quizzes, examinations (written and oral), papers, oral presentations, and laboratory reports. Another way I assess student learning is to determine if my students are well prepared for courses that follow my course or for graduate school and careers in the field of exercise science. This is much more difficult to determine objectively, but the fact that over 50% of our sports medicine graduates go to graduate school and that our graduates are eagerly recruited by graduate programs in exercise science and physical therapy, are indications that the sports medicine faculty are effective in preparing students for their future challenges. Finally, student evaluations indicate that the courses I teach are rigorous and that the information that is presented is interesting, challenging, and valuable to the students' long-term goals.

I know that I must continue to grow as a teacher/learner if I am to be effective in my teaching and research. Reading journals and books in my subject area as well as reading more broadly in the academy helps me continue to learn. In addition I continue to conduct research, and attend and present at regional, national and international meetings. I also have participated in teaching, technology, and vocation workshops offered by the Center for Teaching and the Center for Faith and Learning. These workshops have been invaluable to me as a teacher and as a person. Finally, I am blessed at Pepperdine to have outstanding colleagues, in sports medicine, natural science, and across the university from whom I have learned much about effective teaching.

Writing my story of vocation last year, in a seminar lead by Richard Hughes and D'Esta Love, helped me more clearly articulate my rationale for teaching. I teach because I feel called "to educate, inspire, and challenge others to know their bodies and to keep their bodies, minds, and spirits in optimal health so they can better serve humankind for God's glory". I have always loved learning, asking questions, and sharing what I've learned with others. Being a teaching assistant for human anatomy, during my senior year in college, further cemented by desire to pursue graduate degrees so I could teach and do research in the field of exercise science at the university level. Teaching at a Christian university allows me to share openly that my faith is the foundation for all that I am and all that I do. I challenge the students to make time, while at Pepperdine University, to think about the bigger questions of "What am I suppose to do with my life?" and "Where do my passions and abilities meet a deep need of the world?". I share how I have answered these questions and try to be "God incarnate" to my students. When I feel overworked and undervalued I return to my ideals for teaching - to guide others in the understanding of the human body so they might be all they were created to be. This thought rejuvenates and inspires me to discover new ways to make my subject come alive and to motivate my students to learn!

Farzin Madjidi
Professor of Leadership
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

My teaching is inspired by what may appear to be disparate sources including: a passage from the Bible, an aptly named 80s romantic comedy and a poorly translated Chinese proverb that I once saw pasted on the back of a cash register at a local restaurant.

The Bible

My character as a person and a teacher is most influenced by the 10th Chapter of the Gospel of Mark, verse 43: “Instead, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first, must be slave for all.” I aspire to be a servant leader. I believe my role as a teacher is to serve my students in such a way that enables them to fulfill their possibilities and to bring the most out of each and every one of them. To me, every student has infinite potential entrusted in him/her by God and they have the ability to accomplish whatever goals they pursue. My work is to set high standards, then pave the way and remove obstacles so that my students can achieve their goals.

I have learned that serving my students, “washing their feet”, means to meet them at their level; to inspire them to know, to excite them to learn, to be available to them for help, to take what I know and present it in different ways so that they can ALL understand it. I believe that students are at the center of the learning process and they can master any subject. To inspire and excite them I bring relevance to course material and try to present topics in fun and interesting ways so that students will understand and enjoy learning. I continually look for ways to improve my teaching skills. I constantly search for better textbooks, supplemental readings, simulations and infusions of technology to reduce the stress level of students and to enhance their learning. In every one of my courses, I devise my own handouts and presentations that deconstruct the subject into more palatable blocks, followed by relevant, applicable examples and assignments. From topics posted on web pages, using newsgroups and virtual chat rooms, to editing movies and making my own DVDs to emphasize a point on a topic, if it helps students learn better, I will learn to do them.

Success has to be meaningful to students. As a student, nothing seemed hollower than an easy “A” in a class. As such, I am a firm believer of high standards and objective assessment of outcomes. My assignments are demanding and rigorous. In my classes, I use a number of ways to assess student learning. For example, to promote group-work, I require a group paper in every course. Upon the completion of the group paper, each student submits a confidential assessment of contributions by each group member. I use the results of these assessments to prorate individual grades based on the group grade. I preface this exercise by telling students to use this evaluation tool to support one-another’s success rather than to punish an under-performer. We then create a vision for this tool whereby, early in preparation of an assignment, the group would ask an under-performing student how they could support him/her to get a score of 5 out of 5, rather than wait to the end to give him/her a score of 1 out of 5. I require weekly assignments that allow me to keep the students engaged in the course and to provide them with regular feedback. I also give exams that measure higher level thinking and emphasize a student’s ability to demonstrate an understanding of the underlying principles used in analyzing and interpreting a topic.

I have a commitment to be readily available to my students. I post my home telephone number on every syllabus. I encourage my students to call me any time they have questions. I know all my students by their first names and know something about their lives and aspirations. I regularly coach current and former students on various personal or professional matters and provide letters of recommendations for them. I greatly value their trust and respect and work hard to earn it.

The 80's Romantic Comedy

In 1982, I saw a movie called "If you could see what I hear" which was based on the life of blind musician Tom Sullivan. The title of the movie has served me as a metaphor for the relationship I have with every student. If only they could see the gifts I hear in them! I see enormous potential in every student regardless of the background, level of education, or value system from which they come. I view my job as helping students discover their potential and to help them unleash it. I challenge my students to have big dreams for their lives, and work with them to believe in themselves and in their God-given talents. What I dream for them, what I see as their potential, has to be unbounded lest it would limit what they can accomplish. To illustrate, I start every course by asking students to introduce themselves to the group and to tell the group what they would be doing personally and professionally in 5 years from now, IF they could receive every break or miracle for which they could ask. They often respond with a safe projection of what they do in the present into the future (e.g., I want to be the manager of the group for which I now work). I then ask them if what they had just said really required "every break or miracle they could ask for" and challenge them to look at what can be possible for them under the best of circumstances. Once the students settle on their dream jobs or careers, I ask them to write their would-be title on their name tents. What they write on the name tent – who they say then can be in 5-years under the best of circumstances, becomes the basis of my relationship with them. I relate to them as though they have already become the person they dream of being in 5 years. This approach sets a high standard to which my students often live up to. The name tents become my constant reminder to never doubt their capacity to accomplish the great success I dream for them and my responsibility to expand that dream. Once they buy into this dream, a shift occurs in how they do their homework, write their papers, complete their exams, and in the way they treat themselves and their colleagues – with respect, dignity and integrity worthy of them under the best of circumstances. It also motivates me to be the best teacher I can be. It is a whole lot more rewarding to teach a seminar to a group of CEOs, leaders in the non-profit world, or otherwise outstanding women and men than it is to work with a room full of students whom you perceive as unmotivated and acrimonious

The Chinese Proverb

"Go to the people. Learn from the people, Love them.
Start with what they know - Build on what they have.
But to the best leaders - When their task is accomplished - Their work is done,
The people will remark - We have done it ourselves."

This proverb has taught me that teaching is about giving, not receiving. Teaching is about the student, not the teacher. It is not how smart I am, how well I did when I went to school, or how eloquently I can lecture that makes me a teacher; rather how well I support the success of my students that determines my contribution. The proverb teaches me to explore what my student may know or have experienced about a topic. It challenges me to create an environment where students can safely and openly examine topics, to ask and explore questions. An environment in which mistakes are merely opportunities for new explorations and falling down is an opportunity to learn how to get back up on one's own. My job in this environment is to listen to students carefully, to

challenge what they think and to pose new questions that take them beyond what they know to what they don't know and ultimately, to what they don't know, they don't know. It is only in such an environment when students learn to safely inquire on their own and to engage in the lifelong discourse of learning. It is only then that a pursuit that begins with the goal of getting a degree becomes an intellectual inquiry leading to the development of a whole person.

Lastly, the proverb teaches me to unconditionally love my students for they are my students. Like all my colleagues, over the years, I have received kind cards and notes from my students acknowledging my work with them. The most inspiring of these was a Christmas card followed by a shamed telephone call in which a student apologized to me for receiving a "B" in my statistics class and for letting me down. I quickly reassure the student that it was the human "being" in the student that I loved and respected, not the human "doing" and that our relationship, trust and mutual respect was fully intact.

Teaching is the greatest of all vocations. It has been a true blessing for me to have taught the last ten years of my life. In the future, I hope to continue to build and improve on my teaching skills and philosophy, as it is merely a context that enables brilliant women and men to seek to complete their educational goals. Relative to this context, my worth as a teacher can only be measured by how well my students succeed in their various pursuits. I am only successful if I have helped them create something that has far exceeded their own beliefs in their abilities.

Marshall D. Nickles
Professor of Economics
Graziadio School of Business and Management

It is a true privilege to be considered for the Howard A. White Award for Teaching Excellence. I say this because Howard White is one of the people I think of most when reflecting back on my teaching career.

I was hired to teach in the Business Department at Pepperdine in 1966. The University was located at the old campus at 79th and Vermont, and Dr. White was the Dean. I had an opportunity to interface with him as an undergraduate, but never really got to know him until I started teaching. As a teacher, I first walked into the classroom at the age of 23, and knew by the end of that first class meeting that teaching would be a life long passion for me. During the first few trimesters of teaching at Pepperdine, I spent a good deal of time with Howard. He gave me the encouragement that I needed at that time in my life. He was a role model and is a fondly remembered friend.

After almost forty years of teaching at Pepperdine, I feel as much energy and excitement about teaching as I did the first day I started. For me, the desire to teach comes from within. If a teacher is not inspired, it is most difficult to get students excited to learn. Simple transmitting textbook content is not what I consider effective teaching. Students as whole persons must be considered. Therefore, I believe that most students come to Pepperdine for the same reason I did as an undergraduate – they believe in the mission of the University. Pepperdine offers the opportunity to learn in an

environment steeped in Christian beliefs, values, ethics, and a sense of giving. This must be communicated in the classroom.

At the beginning of each class, I ask students why they selected Pepperdine's Graziadio School of Business and Management. This question allows the class and me to come together as a learning community with common goals and objectives for learning. Bringing us together as a group is important because it makes students feel comfortable. If this rapport is not built, that lack invariably leaves some students at a disadvantage. That is, they may want to speak up, but are afraid of asking the wrong questions in front of their peers or me. I explain the importance of class interaction in an open, honest, and trusting environment. It is only then that we can learn from each other in an atmosphere that encourages asking questions rather than one that is competitively encumbered.

Over the years I have found that student interest intensifies when one approaches the subject of economics from the three-stage perspective of the past, present, and future. This approach allows me to demonstrate how economics is integrated with other subjects and why it is considered the foundation of business administration. My philosophy of making economics relevant by approaching it from the aforementioned three stages is exemplified below.

Examining the past begins with a lively discussion of the evolution of economic thought, which allows me the opportunity to focus on why independent and critical thinking was and is necessary for democracy and capitalism to evolve. It also allows students to understand why developing the ability to ask the right types of questions to solve business problems is as important as reading the text. As the course progresses, I try to emphasize the reason that capitalism allowed the United States to become what it is today: Capitalism allowed creative thinking and innovation to flourish. Students soon begin to understand that a successful business executive is a reflection of the economic environment in which he or she functions.

Present or current economic events provide a great platform for teaching. Students seem to feel empowered when they understand the reasoning behind timely economic issues. Thinking about cause and effect relationships and the reasons why things happen as they do can help students deal with "gray" issues found within the business community. It is these "gray" areas in business that provide an opportunity to introduce related subjects such as social behavior, law, ethics, and morality. Teaching the core theory of economics can be made very interesting for students if it is grounded in practical pedagogy.

Applying course material to a type of futuristic environment is a way to discern the level of learning that has taken place among students. Thinking about the future excites students. In today's business climate, the future is global, and global business is highly competitive. Learning to successfully compete is very appealing to younger generations. By requiring model building, computer simulations, and forecasting projects that are coupled with online research, students begin to better appreciate how to address competitive international business problem solving. Because business problem solving is often in "gray" areas, assumptions must be made about the future. Once students are convinced of this, I can proceed to teach the need for thinking that is creative, logical, and ethical.

My student population ranges from undergraduates to executive MBA students. It can often be difficult to serve this broad range of students. I recognized several years ago that the Business School was enrolling students from mixed social generations. It was then that I began to study

generations as student groups. The study provided me with insight into the attitudes, behaviors, expectations and needs of different matriculating populations. This approach has allowed me to learn from the students and to develop rigorous course material that is tailored to the populations I am teaching.

As mentioned earlier, I learn from my students, but I also know the value of learning through practical experience in the business world. Gaining practical knowledge is best obtained by being active in the community from a variety of dimensions. I have done this by serving on the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accrediting committees as well as on profit and nonprofit corporate boards, by consulting domestically and internationally, and by speaking to business and political organizations in Europe and Asia. I have also published many articles and presented talks and papers to professional and academic organizations. Finally, but not least, I have been involved in my local community and church. I have found the above activities not only to be helpful in developing my teaching skills, but also necessary in fulfilling my obligation to students and to the mission of the University.

My teaching philosophy of being relevant in order to be effective requires me to be comfortable with change. This is why my syllabi, teaching style, and view of curriculum design are constantly evolving. After serving as chair of the EMBA Committee for the last six years, I have had an opportunity to directly influence the current curriculum design of that program. Pepperdine's EMBA Program is academically rigorous, innovative, integrated, and highly sensitive to student needs and expectations. As a result, the Graziadio School is ranked overall among the highest in the nation. I am also pleased to state that a nationally circulated magazine has ranked our EMBA program number one in ethics.

While there are several facets associated with teaching excellence, none is more important than academic rigor. High standards are a must for enhancing the future of the University and the future net worth for students. In an effort to contribute toward the maintenance of meaningful academic standards, I have strived to ensure that the average GPA among my students is a true representation of my students' scholastic achievement. Over the years, I have felt successful despite my strict grading because of consistently receiving high course evaluations from my students.

Absolute excellence in teaching is, in my opinion, a concept that can never really be achieved. However, this does not mean that one does not receive a great deal of gratification in trying. The vision of being a teacher who can really make a difference in the lives of students is a great motivator. In sum, my philosophy of teaching is to be committed to teaching my students in a manner that helps them to learn and grow into productive, ethical citizens and hopefully help them achieve the same level of satisfaction in life that I have had at Pepperdine.

Milton A. Pullen
Professor of Music
Seaver College

When people inquire about my vocation I proudly exclaim, "I am a teacher!" I have been a teacher for forty years. I know for sure that I am a better teacher today than I was forty years ago even though early in my career I thought I was prepared to conquer the music world, especially in the area of choral music. Fortunately, my youthful enthusiasm and energy saw me through the hard knocks and offered me a few rewards regardless of my inexperience. Moreover, I never lost the thirst to learn more about my profession. Now, at the apex of my teaching career, my passion for music and music education remains and in place of my youthful enthusiasm is a professional life enriched in wisdom that only the seasoned teacher can acquire.

Though my thirst for knowledge in music and music teaching has never abated, I do not believe that scholarship in itself makes a teacher. The ability to transmit information to students requires communicative skills, the ability to inspire and a passion for the subject matter to be shared. However, the formula for excellent teaching is not complete without at least one other ingredient; namely, caring for students in and out of class. Displaying an interest in the students' ambitions, social activities, their problems and concerns provides more opportunities for effective teaching in the classroom. In other words, knowledge *plus* passion *plus* communicative skills *minus* love *equals* zero/zilch (*I Corinthians* 13). I would find teaching to be an incredibly difficult task if I did not dearly love and care for my "kiddos." This, above all else, is the most important reason for my desire to continue to teach. I have found that as I express interest in each of my students, they, in turn, develop an appreciation for me as a teacher who has made a difference in their lives.

I share with my students the realization that the choral experience can be considered a paradigm for living. For example, in choir rehearsals there are struggles and frustrations to face. It is working through the struggles and frustrations that pays off in the end. The same is true in life. The principle, "it is better to give than receive," is also experienced. In choir highly talented students learn this concept by making a commitment to seek the goals and objectives of the team even if it requires the denial of self.

In choral music, especially on undergraduate campuses, it is commonly difficult to recruit enough male singers into choir to balance with the female singers. However, seldom have I had to deal with this problem probably because I have been able to relate with the interests most men have, such as athletics. Here a connection is made between the male student and me. When I taught in high school (21 years) I would go to the gym when the sports teams were in session and play pick-up basketball with the student athletes. To this day I am a sports fan and participant though my playing days in the gym are waning. Golf seems a little easier. Having made this connection through sports I have always had an abundance of physically fit men to sing in my choir. Renouncing the "choir boy" stigma has been my quest for forty years.

In the rehearsal hall, I teach the men to sing and behave like gentlemen. Not a year goes by that this is not addressed. Usually we will have been rehearsing a number with a tender or serene message. After we have learned the notes (the science) and the time has come to bond into an art form the poetic verse with the notes, I approach the subject of masculinity in this manner: "Men, here is the

definition of gentleness. It is the ability to restrain strength. There is no such thing as a gentle Chihuahua dog. A small dog is too weak to be considered gentle. But there are horses that are described as gentle, **if** the horse has learned to restrain its strength. Men should desire to be strong physically, emotionally and mentally, but then, (*addressing the men*) you must at times be compelled to restrain your strength. By doing so you may be called a gentle man. Now gentlemen, regarding the number we are singing today, I am going to ask you to sing with restrained strength. No weakness should be present. Can you do it? You bet you can!"

I have been a part of the music world most of my life. I have observed the singing of pre-school children, elementary students, intermediate and high school students, church congregations and community choirs. I have adjudicated and rehearsed hundreds of choirs and scrutinized great live and recorded performances. At every level I have heard the science of music time after time, while upon some occasions I have enjoyed the performances because of the amazing artistry. More times than not, the music was precise, though there were exceptions. The subtle nuances of detail were impeccable but the transmission of art was lacking. The canvas (ensemble) displayed the science but, as in paintings, it is the shape that should become the focus, not the brushstrokes that technically formed the shape. Simply put, musicality is an example of the art of science. It is my desire, whether in the classroom or in the rehearsal hall, to teach the physics of sound but to leave with my students an enriched appreciation for the art. Then, and only then will the performers and the listeners brush shoulders with a master composer and the greatness of God, the one who gave mankind the gift

It is of utmost importance in my teaching that I make decisions regarding choral repertoire that connects with the audience who graciously supports the cause of the Fine Arts Division of Pepperdine. The choir benefits by having the opportunity to sing many varying styles of music. Programming should also include some music that the listener may not fully understand but can appreciate. Therefore, when the choir sings for such occasions as Founders Day, Parent's Weekend, convocations or seasonal music many of the selections are less formal and perhaps more traditional. When presenting a Master Works Concert scholarly music is selected, music composed by the masters such as Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, Gounod and Verdi. In every case, whether trendy pop or classic in nature, the music must have a sense of artistic integrity.

In an institution of higher learning, particularly in a liberal arts school, students are given the chance to confront the best of human experience. In every field, in different times and places, instances of supreme accomplishment and skill have taken place. Students must confront the best of humanity so that they have an accurate measuring stick with which to evaluate themselves. Without an awareness of past greatness there is little chance that a student will be able to manifest greatness in his or her own life. A student is ill-served if he is made to believe that an institution of higher learning should merely reflect society as it is, but rather, he should also be made aware of what was, and what theoretically could be, so that he has the tools for making personal life-shaping decisions. I agree with the classical worldview of thinkers such as Socrates who said that the ultimate reason for becoming educated is to "know thyself." It takes hard work, careful consideration and comparison to all other humans before one can truly begin to "know thyself." Students must be confronted with the best of the past, the variety of the present, and the possibilities for the future. In this manner students will begin to develop their own distinctive skills and characteristics. One of my greatest desires in life is to be remembered by my students, not as a choir director, nor a performer or a singer, but as a teacher -one who taught about life through music.

Yearn ago I remember occasionally singing a gospel song titled, "Oh, to Be Like Thee." The last phrase stated, "Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart." I would love the image of Christ the healer, or Christ the Son of God stamped on my heart. I would love to be Christ-like in all I say and do, to be like Christ the Messiah, the forgiver and Savior, to be like Christ the Prince of Peace. I would love to bear any of those images but as a human being I fall miserably short. On the other hand, if the Lord grants to me a few more years to teach, I will strive with all my heart to be like Him, a master teacher and servant Still, I will struggle and at times fail to reach the mark, but I am confident that the reward will be in running the race, whether or not I am on my feet when I cross the line.

Regan H. Schaffer
Assistant Professor of Organizational Behavior and Management
Seaver College

I want to fulfill George Pepperdine's original vision when he said in his Founder's Statement, "The faculty... will give careful attention to safeguarding and deepening the faith of the students, increasing their loyalty to Jesus." I believe this calls for my role as a faculty member to be much more than a teacher, but a mentor and role model. I am to be a mentor to my students as Christ has been to me: to love them unconditionally, to challenge them in their beliefs, to encourage them to seek truth, to hold them accountable to their actions, to extend grace and mercy when appropriate, and to help them develop a Christian worldview that includes respect and service towards others. My philosophy of teaching stems from my belief that we are all teachers and learners. Consequently, in the classroom I try to create a learning community by serving as a facilitator rather than lecturer creating an environment where all participants are expected to contribute to the learning of others. I believe that character and intellect should not be mutually exclusive and that my students should seek personal and academic excellence. I expect this of my students and I expect this of myself. Furthermore, I have to create opportunities for my students to reflect on the connection between what they have learned and how they live their lives and the responsibility that comes with knowledge. As a result, I struggle with what Parker Palmer calls "the teacher's fearful heart" as I try to balance the known with the unknown, the control with the freedom, and the objectivity with the subjectivity. This tension fuels my passion for teaching and my continual attempt to create a learning community with my students. My greatest desire, however, is that in community with my students I can help them to realize more fully how God can use their unique gifts to serve His world.

I live out my teaching philosophy through a variety of methods. To begin, I always seek to push my students beyond comprehension to application through service-learning projects, case studies, and significant oral and written reflection. I want to create room for them to process what they are learning so as to think intentionally not only about *how* to apply what they are learning, but *why* and in *what ways*. In my discipline of management, I want to move my students beyond effective models of managing a profit or nonprofit organization to *why* it is important to be effective and *how* the way they manage can impact people and society. I hope to challenge them to reframe their paradigm of success towards a focus on significance that reaches beyond themselves to the influence they can have on

others. Consequently, I cannot discuss management principles without examining personal motivations, values, responsibility and faith as fundamental aspects of effective management and leadership.

Given my training, I am also conscientious of the way I design my courses to meet their intended objectives. I am inspired by the proverb that says, “teach me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand.” I seek to utilize all aspects of this proverb in my courses which integrate lecture, modeling (through videos, guest speakers, and case studies) and active involvement through service-learning projects. This is most evident in the capstone course I designed (with two colleagues) called Service Leadership. In the course students study the servant leadership model of management and put their learning into practice as part of a consulting team to a nonprofit organization experiencing a business challenge. The students create an identity (such as Waves Enterprises), negotiate a contract with their nonprofit client and must maintain a professional and collaborative relationship with their client that culminates in a final presentation of their strategy to their client’s staff and board. Aside from the service-learning project, the class also involves extensive reading, discussion, and reflection papers. Knowing our mission, I have a segment on the integration of faith and work that includes research on the topic, a speaker series and a paper where students explore how their faith informs their leadership philosophy and management practices. While much of this may be subjective in nature, I take an objective and developmental approach to grading student projects and reports. Since a significant portion of the course is the service-learning component, I expect the students to provide professional, informed and creative consulting projects for their clients. The students have a lot of freedom to negotiate their contract with their client and craft the project, however, I require substantial research to support recommendations that demonstrate understanding of the complexities of the business challenge and reflect viable solutions. Since their nonprofit clients often implement the student’s projects, I want to ensure that they deliver a quality product. Consequently, the student’s submit numerous written drafts where I provide feedback and meet with them for analysis. I also integrate peer and client feedback throughout the semester while attempting to inspire the students to measure their success less on a grade and more on the quality of their work and its impact on the organization and the constituents the organization serves. I expect their projects to represent their best efforts and reflect positively on themselves, their team and Pepperdine. Through the synergy of the class assignments and service-learning engagement, I pray that my students will be transformed as they realize the outcome of what happens when one uses his or her knowledge to truly serve others. Since its inception, we have partnered with over 100 different nonprofit organizations who have served as collaborators in the learning process. I love teaching this course and now direct the program which enables me to recruit and train the nonprofit partners, but also further develop the course curriculum.

Finally, I seek to develop opportunities for mentoring and deeper relationships with students both in and outside of the classroom. This happens in a variety of ways. One example is that I require all of my students to have a 20-minute appointment with me each semester. During this time I rarely discuss class issues with them, but instead ask about their families, personal goals and allow them to ask me anything they want on any topic. Usually we need more than 20 minutes and often this is a catalyst for future conversations. One of the highlights of the semester is when I host my students in my home for a class meal and blessing at the end of the term. This has become a meaningful way for us to end the semester and reflect on what we’ve experienced together. I have also been honored to be invited to speak to student groups both in formal settings like the Spiritual Summit for the overseas students and Care Group to informal groups such as a Project Serve team, small group Bible studies, and affinity groups. My husband and I have also mentored many couples both married and dating which has been especially rewarding. I realize some of these activities are outside of my obligations as a teacher, but I find them of equal importance.

All of this has translated into a very rewarding and personally meaningful teaching career. I often say my greatest joy is when I'm with my students. Of late, my scholarship has focused more on pedagogy and the integration of faith and work spawned from my success in addressing these issues in the classroom. I recently designed a minor in Nonprofit Management, which is already bearing fruit by the increased numbers of students committing to careers of service and actively engaged in internships. The latest course I've developed is titled Leadership through the Eyes of Faith which is an interdisciplinary class designed to allow students to further explore their vocation in the context of examining their personal and professional gifts and goals. It has been exciting to develop this course and I am grateful to be in a community where such pursuits are valued.

J. Christopher Soper
Blanche E. Seaver Chair of Social Science
Professor of Political Science
Seaver College

In a university with so many gifted teachers, it is an honor to be nominated for the Howard A. White Teaching Award. In the pages below I want briefly to discuss the goals and philosophy of my teaching so that the committee might have a better sense for me as a teacher.

The goals of my teaching are to inspire students to a passionate concern for the political world, to encourage critical thinking in them, and to invite them to relate their religious faith with the social and political world of which they are a part.

Inspiring Passionate Commitments

As with most professors, I want my students to care about the material that we study together. However, it is a particular kind of passion that I hope to inspire in them, one grounded in a thorough knowledge of the subject matter and combined with an awareness that politics matters a great deal to each one of them. At the beginning of each semester, I tell the students in my Introduction to American Politics Course that they do not have to love the study or practice of politics, but I will consider myself an abject failure as a teacher if they conclude at the end of the term that politics is not really important to them. Whether we like it or not, politics and government affect nearly every facet of our lives; the passion I hope to inspire in my students is to engage them in the process of deliberating on and involving themselves in the making of those important political choices. Instead of passively acquiescing to the political decisions made on our behalf, I hope that my students will understand the value of actively participating in politics.

Inspiring this kind of passion cannot be realized, however, absent my fundamental respect for the students. At a minimum, respect for the student means my being open to the values, questions, and concerns that students bring to the classroom. It is vitally important to create an open classroom environment where students are encouraged to develop their own opinions on the material presented. This is particularly crucial in teaching political science courses where people often have

very strong feelings about the issues addressed, and it is both inevitable and laudable that there will be discussion and debate on many contested matters.

I try to remain as objective as possible in presenting the course material, even playing the devil's advocate so that students can appreciate the validity of opposing viewpoints on a controversial issue. There are times when I have felt that I might be doing a disservice to students by being so "neutral" in presenting both sides of an issue, particularly if it reinforces the idea that there are no fundamental principles in life on which to ground our political positions. The point of modeling this behavior is not, however, to discourage students from having heart-felt convictions; it is, instead, to elicit an attitudinal change in students who have rarely thought about the basis of their own social and political opinions. Ideally, students will leave my class with strong political beliefs, but they will also have a greater awareness for the political views of those with whom they do not agree.

Encouraging Critical Thinking

A second goal of my teaching is to encourage critical thinking in my students. The best way that I have found to accomplish this is to get the students to see the connection between the materials that they are studying and the world of politics outside of the classroom. Fortunately for me, politics intrudes in so many disparate ways in our lives that it is not difficult to help students to make those vital connections. What better way to have students wrestle with such a fundamental question as what is the purpose of government than by considering with them a newspaper article on the growing number of Americans without health insurance? The best "technique" to help students appreciate the tension between the promotion of civil liberties and the country's need to secure its borders, is to have them read an article on the rationale for, and the controversial provisions of, the USA Patriot Act.

The theologian Karl Barth once said that a faithful Christian pastor has to prepare his sermons with the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other. I feel similarly about my teaching of political science: the textbook and the newspaper deserve near equal treatment. The point is that events of the day wonderfully intrude on my teaching of political science; there is nothing more gratifying than having students in my class engaged in discussion and debate on the world outside of the classroom. My role as the teacher is to facilitate those conversations and to help students appreciate that the reading material – which can sometimes seem remote from the "real world" – provides a valuable context, history, and structure to the day-to-day political events.

Another way to engage students in critical thinking is to treat them as capable thinkers who are able to do the reading assignments on the day that they are due, discuss them articulately, and defend and justify their opinion with reasoned arguments that are not just based on personal opinion. In short, I try to create a demanding environment in my classes and I expect the students to do rigorous academic work. All of my classes have many reading and writing assignments; every day in class I engage students in conversations about the reading material, trying to tease from them the author's argument in the reading for that day. Finally, I try to make my classes fun and I readily admit that I use whatever is at my disposal -- from the foibles of political figures to Jay Leno's latest monologue-- to bring a healthy dose of levity to my classes.

Faith and Learning: Asking the Big Questions

The third goal of my teaching is to have students relate their religious faith with the social and political world of which they are a part. In doing so, I try to be extremely sensitive to and respectful of the various religious backgrounds of our students, and of those students who are not persons of faith. However, I believe that at Pepperdine we should encourage students to make connections between their spiritual convictions and their academic work. One example of this comes from my class, *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective*. In that class, I try to integrate an academic study of how religion and politics are involved with one another around the world, with a more personalized focus by the students and myself on what is the proper relationship between faith and politics. One assignment I ask to students to complete is to write a reflective essay on what they believe their faith requires of them in terms of social and political action. The purpose of the assignment is not, of course, to get the “right” answer, but to begin what I hope will be a lifelong process on the students’ part to consider how faith could or should inform their politics.

There are two convictions related to faith and learning that I hope my students will gain from each of the classes that I teach. One is that religion is endemic to the human experience. Science and the scientific way of knowing are the hallmarks of modern thinking, and while they have helped humanity answer previously unanswerable questions, enabled us to gain a certain mastery over the natural world, and provided a certain challenge to religious ways of knowing, science still is unable to provide answers to the existential questions that haunt human existence. In my field of political science, these questions include: what is the purpose of government, what is justice, what are my political responsibilities, and who is my neighbor? As the great philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal once wrote: “Reasons last step is the recognition that there are an infinite number of things which are beyond it. Reason is merely feeble if it does not go so far as to realize that.” Political discourse can and should be informed by the insights of people of faith.

Having said that, I also want my religious students to engage these questions with the proper attitude of respect and humility. I applaud the firmness of conviction of my students, but it must be tempered by the recognition that, to borrow words from the Apostle Paul, “now we see in a mirror dimly, then we shall see face to face.” A certain degree of humility, therefore, must always characterize the political pronouncements of the faithful. Sadly, religionists often fail to demonstrate political modesty in the assertions we make.

In short, the goals of my teaching are to inspire students to passionate commitments, to help them gain critical thinking skills, and to involve them in relating their faith to the social and political world around them. I know that I have often failed in reaching those goals, but I would like to think that I have also sometimes succeeded.