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Teaching Statement

At Michigan State University, I have gained valuable experience serving as a teaching assistant and as an instructor for my own courses. My main teaching interest is in applied microeconomics in the fields of labor, health, and development; I am also interested in applied econometrics. Given my research background and coursework, I can offer students the ability to obtain a deeper understanding of a wide range of empirical questions in both theory and application.

Teaching Philosophy and Goal

I view teaching as a complement to research that is beneficial to both teachers and students. Teaching without research quickly becomes stereotyped, unexciting — removed from the ever-growing frontiers of knowledge — while research without teaching becomes unintelligible and uncommunicative. Economics is an intuitive science; thus, continuous interaction with fresh minds through teaching makes research more proactive and highly productive. My goal is to ensure that students leave my classes with the ability to apply economic reasoning to real-world questions. Although having analytical skills regarding problem solving is important, the most valuable element in economics education is to develop the ability to think critically. Training in the field of economics should give students the skills to be able to hold public discussions that are based on scientific and value-free statements. However, as I always remind my students, because economics as a science should be value-free, we do need a set of values, ethics, or ideology to make choices. Positive economics, by definition, is unable to provide such value judgments. Therefore, I believe that the goal of economics education is to provide scientific evidence rather than answers with which citizens can make their own choices, as answers are often based on values.

Teaching Approach

For course material, I focus on providing a broad picture of economic thinking and many real-world examples. Just as a research paper needs a clear research question, I want students to have a concrete understanding of the topic. For example, when I taught development economics, I asked the students to read an article about the daily life of the poor living on less than two dollars a day in developing countries in the first week. When I taught introductory microeconomics, I briefly introduced Karl Popper's philosophy of science. In order to draw students' attention to contemporary issues, I also asked students to do a presentation in order to apply what they learned. It was not only a task for the students, but also a self-evaluation of my teaching goals. As a teacher, it is very exciting to see students using economic principles to analyze real-world questions. For example, a group of students from my introductory microeconomics course did an amazing

presentation by using a simple demand and supply model to explain the dramatic fluctuation in ticket prices in Belmont Stakes horse racing.

For teaching to be effective, I must be aware of classroom management and pay attention to details. For a medium-size class of about forty students, I let students know that I remember their names and faces. This actually helps to prevent students from cheating. I always come to the classroom ten minutes early to have an opportunity to interact with students, either by answering questions or just some small talk. I also actively communicate with students. As the motivation is relatively low in summer courses, I regularly send reminders about course progress, homework, and exams. Moreover, I keep tracking students' performance and spend extra time on individual students who may need assistance. In fact, for one student with a concentration problem, I kept a close eye on his progress to ensure that he finished each task on time in addition to providing his university-required accommodations.

Teaching Experience

During the 2012 Summer semester at MSU, I taught introductory microeconomics (EC 201), which is a required course for every student at MSU, so most students in my classes were not economics majors. I also taught a middle-level undergraduate development economics course (EC 310), which is an elective course for economics majors. In addition to serving as an instructor, I have been a teaching assistant in advanced econometrics, comparative economics, senior seminar for economics majors, trade, and macroeconomics. These classes have given me ample experience creating problem sets and exam questions and interacting with students during office hours and review sections. I have attached my sample syllabus and student evaluation for EC201 below.