TEACHING STATEMENT

I have dedicated a significant amount of time to developing the skills necessary to excel in the classroom and have practiced those skills in a variety of contexts. I received formal training through Duke's Certificate in College Teaching courses in which I learned evidence-based teaching methods that use clearly defined learning objectives, active learning techniques, and regular assessment of student performance. I then used those skills and approaches to teach introductory sociology at Duke and Durham Technical Community College (Durham Tech) in the same term. Through those experiences, I recognized how evidence-based methods did not guarantee engaging, successful classroom experiences but rather required thoughtful application to each classroom context. Meanwhile, I worked one-on-one and with small groups of students in my project-based courses and tutoring sessions during which students were open about their understanding of the course content and their struggles with the material.

I apply active learning techniques regularly in the classroom to help students organize their own thoughts and assess their progress. In theory courses, including introduction to sociology, I break up the lecture with minute-papers, case-studies, and small-group discussions of core concepts. For example, I have students apply concepts of role strain, role conflict, and culture by listing their social groups, identifying norms and expectations placed on them, and discussing how they negotiate those norms. Most students identify temporal and spatial factors, and at least a few of the students discuss relatively complex negotiations of conflicting group expectations. I also use contrasting video clips of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcom X discussing blacks' roles in the fight for civil rights to illustrate the complexities of studying heterogeneous social movements that students might otherwise think of as homogeneous. The same techniques can be applied to other theory-based courses.

From my experience, social science professors take on a distinct role on STEM-based campuses. Because a majority of their students come from other disciplines, they are faced with the challenge of communicating a framework for understanding the world to these students. Some professors treat this as an unfortunate condition, where students take social science courses only because they are required, easy, or "blow off" courses; this was a common opinion of social science electives among my peers at Illinois Institute of Technology. But the dedication of my professors illustrated a much more positive outlook,

which I intend to follow. Despite these (real or imagined) challenges, I believe that such professors are afforded the rare opportunity to meaningfully shape the perspectives of those people who will lead the organizations and design the technology that impacts the social structure we all live in. While we might be disappointed that a particularly bright, engaged engineering student never minors in sociology or takes additional courses, it is important to appreciate and use the time we do have with such students to give them the tools and knowledge our discipline provides to make them a more socially aware and critical engineer—and thus citizen. Further, social scientists can provide compelling cases for real-world, multidisciplinary projects as well as useful frames for understanding how to implement technology in particular contexts. In other words, social scientists play a valuable role on campuses where they are solidly the minority.

My aspiration to be a professor comes with the recognition that it is a position of power in the university. Ideally, professors not only create diverse campuses but also foster positive, growth-oriented interactions between students of different backgrounds. From the perspective of a liberal arts education, these interactions will help our students understand the worlds they live in better. And from the perspective of justice, they are a way to use our authority to address historic inequalities and cognitive biases about our peers. Through my work in the classroom, I hope to achieve those ideal goals. But as a sociologist, I know that institutions and policies can either facilitate or hinder whatever personal characteristics I attempt to embody and the strategies I use in the classroom. So, while I have worked on facilitating experiences in the classroom, I understand that I need to recognize students' experiences in the university system broadly, and I need to recognize when my position can be used to advocate for their good.

Finally, I treat my status as a teacher as something that I must continually earn rather than is ascribed to me once I earn a professional title. I intend to continue my in-person training through the means available to me, including institutional resources available for teaching development, peer observation, and teaching workshops available through the American Sociological Association (ASA). I also use resources such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Teaching Sociology*, and ASA's "Trails" website to expand my repertoire and keep up to date on developments in the field. I am also continually developing new web-based tools to use in the classroom to supplement publicly available tools, which I intend to disseminate and discuss through the forums such as those described above.