Statement of Teaching

As a teacher, my primary goal is to demystify and democratize research. I hope to empower my students to gain the skills to participate in research or critically assess research. I ask them to question what is in textbooks and to synthesize and communicate information across disciplines. I do this in the setting of traditional lecture-based teaching as well as in seminar and research class settings.

I currently teach two main lecture-based classes. One is an undergraduate Health Economics/Health Policy class, and the other is a graduate-level methods class. The undergraduate class is an elective for economics and business majors. This class aims to present the foundational models of health economics and illustrate various healthcare systems' inherent tradeoffs. The class's primary learning outcome is to have students understand and engage in the ongoing health care debate in the US. In this endeavor, I first updated the textbook to one that is more current and presents theory and empirical work side by side. I also changed the syllabus over the years to include more newspaper articles, podcasts, and health blogs from reputable sources. I have removed many of the research articles and replaced them with research summaries. I ask students to write short reflections connecting the ideas in the blogs/podcasts/newspaper articles to the content of the class. I spend class time asking students to think about the validity of the theories and studies and ask them to conduct a final research presentation. Often students choose projects that reflect their own experiences with the health care system and counter prevailing theories about how the system is "supposed" to operate. Based on student evaluation comments, many students have shared that they feel empowered to engage in the broader healthcare debate with others after taking my class.

The second course that I teach is a graduate-level econometrics class. The class can be taught in several ways, either focusing on mathematical proofs or focusing on applying econometric techniques to actual data. I have chosen to focus more on the experiential learning of hands-on data analysis and communication of research results. I created many lab examples to ensure students had multiple opportunities to apply each method covered. At the end of each homework assignment, usually a relatively lengthy empirical analysis, I ask them to describe their results in a two-paragraph blog post. I also require students to do an empirical project and present their findings in a written paper, oral presentation, and poster presentation. Previously, I had vaguely encouraged students to practice presenting their projects. The last time I taught the course, I asked them to practice presenting their findings to their classmates before presenting them to the class. I also asked them to have their classmate send me an email confirming that they had done this part of the assignment. Students have shared that practicing talking about their project was more challenging and rewarding than they anticipated. The ability to communicate research findings is a practical skill not usually emphasized in statistics/econometrics, but it is a skill that I hope students take with them beyond the class.

Much of my teaching is outside of a traditional classroom environment. Since joining SFSU in August 2016, I have served as a mentor or advisor for over 30 students on different research projects. I have published seven peer-reviewed articles with six student mentees. I have published with two undergraduate students—it is very unusual for undergraduate students to publish with faculty within the California State University system. I have also served on two thesis committees as an outside member. Though SFSU does not have a doctoral program, I have occasionally worked with and advised Ph.D. students informally, primarily through my projects and collaborations.

It is important to mention that I often mentor students who are not economics students. Students who work with me are interested in health issues but often have not had the opportunity to develop data analysis skills. While I ask mentees to complete research ethics training, conduct literature reviews, and collect data as other faculty members do, I also expose students to various research software and emphasize the value and necessity of organizing data for research. Importantly, these research

experiences allow students to gain meta-skills not usually taught in a classroom setting. For example, students often have to identify a process and gain new organizational skills to complete their projects.

Moreover, they often have to apply multiple skills acquired throughout their academic training to the research projects. Several students have confided that the journey was challenging and frustrating. Students also shared that they took ownership of the outcome and persevered because they felt supported even when they made mistakes. Once they overcame the initial frustration, they became more confident in their own ability to teach themselves new skills—that is the true impact of these research experiences.