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## **STATEMENT OF TEACHING – David Gurzick**

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### **Teaching Philosophy**

My teaching philosophy is premised on the belief that learning is fundamentally a process of discovery and that the role of the teacher is to prepare and inspire students to actively participate in this process. This goal is reflected in the four key principles of my teaching philosophy as detailed below:

#### **Guide students in developing a comprehensive understanding of fundamental concepts by continually associating these concepts with real-world situations**

Understanding comes from making connections. In my teaching, I continually reinforce foundational principles by connecting them with practical application through examples, taken from my own work and the work of others, including that of expert practitioners. In taking this approach to education, new concepts are continually applied to the “big picture” and connections are built between what might otherwise appear as seemingly disparate concepts. Just as I draw from my own experiences to illustrate concepts and enliven the transfer of knowledge, I ask my students to make connections to their own experiences (for instance, by inviting them to select industries in which they work or are knowledgeable when assignments permit). This practice grounds material in their own life experiences and encourages them to seek out new connections and to activate prior knowledge.

#### **Develop within students the secondary skills that are crucial to long-term success within and beyond the walls of academia**

In addition to instilling a strong theoretical and practical knowledge base, I believe that is critical to instruct students in the secondary skills that distinguish between good and great practitioners. Such skills include articulating and conveying ideas, building proficiency as members of project teams, and developing the attitudes and skills conducive to effective problem solving. The most effective method that I have found to achieve this goal is through an active learning approach with a strong focus on projects that require students to demonstrate their knowledge by applying it to synthesize solutions and new questions.

#### **Provide learning experiences for students that are challenging, relevant, and that promote new discoveries**

I have found that learning experiences can be engineered to foster the discovery of information within a real-world context. A recent project that I assigned to my undergraduate Management of Information Systems class offers an example of this approach. Students were presented with a scenario of an online book retailer that had recently been the victim of a security breach. The students worked in teams to determine how the breach may have occurred and to link their hypotheses with research into real-world examples of breaches at other companies. As they progressed through this research, my students found that the information provided in the scenario was often inadequate to fully assess the likely causes and extent of the breach, thus encouraging them to identify types of information that would be useful in their search. I role-played the part of the CEO of the book retailer and students were invited to ask me for additional specific information. The project culminated in each of the teams making a presentation to the class on the strategies they recommended to the online book retailer for reacting to the breach and for minimizing the risk of its reoccurrence.

**Create an atmosphere where students are encouraged to become the owners of their education and develop the skills and motivation necessary for independent learning**

Ultimately, the goal of education is active learning, not a passive consumption of course material. I believe that students should be stimulated to think on their own and that the structure of the course must permit this. This requires the teacher to establish and foster a safe environment that is open to new ideas, constructive discourse, and a diversity of learning styles. It also requires relevant content and innovative methods that can counteract the barriers to learning that students bring with them. Issues like stress, fatigue, insecurity, and self-consciousness can cause students to become disengaged with the learning process and, when not addressed, can circumvent the best of instructional efforts. I have found that one of the best ways to create a learning environment is to maintain an open dialogue with students and other teachers. I am continually amazed at the honesty of the comments that I have received over the years and my courses have been shaped by this feedback.

It has been said that we are all products of our teachers. I still recall those teaching styles that have proven the most beneficial in my own learning. My teaching reflects their pedagogy, combining their strengths with my own personal style. This also reflects upon my desire to ready my own students for a lifetime of learning and discovery.