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TEACHING STATEMENT

I am passionate about both my research and teaching. I love seeing students have that "ah-ha" moment when the material sinks in and they become genuinely excited about what they are learning. Sometimes I have an "ah-ha" moment when a student asks a question that gives me new insights. Teaching keeps me alert as an educator and a researcher, as I am always challenging myself to explain material in different ways. Students have different socio-economic backgrounds, different levels of mathematical preparation, different scholarly interests, and different ways of learning. My first role as an instructor is to figure out, given these different backgrounds and interests, how to engage the students in the course material. Only then can I successfully guide students through the details, all while reinforcing core ideas.

I recently heard Don Rubin say that the role of a lecture is to present the big picture, then students can go look up the details. I half agree. I agree that presenting the details holds little value if students do not grasp the big picture; thus, the first goal of a lecture is to present the big picture. What is econometrics; what can it do; why do we need it? This gets them thinking about questions like causality, prediction and counter-factual analysis, and now we are all excited about delving into econometrics. But the details can be difficult, especially given students' different backgrounds, and I think walking through the details in lecture is important.

I strive to demystify the necessary statistics while always relating the material to economic theory and real-world human behavior. In econometrics courses, if students can internalize the economic theory and assumptions behind the econometric model, they will be both more motivated to understand the mathematics involved, and more successful in practicing econometrics. It is up to me as an instructor to ensure that each student can relate the material to his or her own life and interests. Whenever I use a data set in Stata, I start with the description of the variables and ask them what economic questions may be of interest. We can then use those ideas to build a toy model together, and discuss what results we expect before running the model. I find this accomplishes two goals. First, the students are more engaged with the material. I believe student engagement greatly encourages comprehension. Having them think about what the next step might be, instead of presenting the material as a fait accompli, challenges students to understand the steps involved. Second, it facilitates discussion of both the estimation results and the assumptions that may have led to unexpected estimation results.

I am genuinely excited about econometrics, but I understand that many students will not understand a concept they are seeing for the first time. I like to start my lectures with a "What did we just do?" section, where I can repeat core ideas to lay the foundation for the current lecture's material. While the specifics of the material and the split between economic theory and statistical machinery differs across levels of econometrics, this general approach guides my instruction at all levels.

I very much enjoy teaching econometrics, and the approach I have outlined above has resonated well with students, as evidenced by the 4.5/5.0 instructor rating I received as a primary instructor for Introduction to Econometrics. My teaching evaluations are available upon request.

I am qualified to teach econometrics at all levels, as well any mathematically oriented courses such as math econ, probability, and statistics. While most of my time in front of a classroom has been in econometrics, I can teach courses across micro theory and applied microeconomics. I have fields in labor and environmental economics, coursework in public finance, and experience as a teaching assistant for introductory economics and intermediate micro theory. My passion for microeconomic applications is what led me to economics, and I would welcome the opportunity to pass that enthusiasm on to the next generation of economists.