What's your philosophy of teaching?

CCFA Workshop, February 8, 2017

- Be concise! A page to a page and a half is probably best, although tenure and promotion statements might be longer (I’d still prefer them concise)
- First person, reflective
- Specific to your discipline
- Should include concrete examples
- If the university is asking for it, they value teaching
- Two types: the job application one and the tenure-and-promotion one
- Should include:
  - What kind of learning environment you want, and how you will get it
  - Goals for students
  - The particular challenges of your own discipline and how you will address them
  - Perhaps an event in your own teaching or research that helped you sharpen your ideas about teaching
  - How your research and creative activity contribute to your teaching

The job application philosophy of teaching:

It’s hard to know what different universities expect, and you probably won’t have much teaching experience, so this should be a personal statement about your approach to teaching, how you would create a good atmosphere for learning in the classroom or studio, and how you would balance teaching with scholarly research and creative activity. It shows that you’re thinking about this aspect of the job. Questions specific to the university should be addressed in the cover letter (unless they ask you to do it in the philosophy of teaching).

The tenure-and-promotion philosophy of teaching:

Helps you clarify your thoughts and tell your colleagues about yourself. It should also address your experiences as a teacher, now that you have more of them, and point out your strengths. It can be a very useful document for contextualizing student evaluations. It might refer to sample documents. “It’s really a Rosetta Stone” for the teaching part of the dossier (Brian Coppola, Chemistry Professor at the University of Michigan, in Montell, “What’s your Philosophy on Teaching …?”)
Some questions to get you started

➢ Why did you choose your field?

➢ Why do you teach?

➢ Have you had an experience that has sharpened your focus and made you think about why and how you teach?

➢ What do you want students to learn?

➢ How will you judge if they’re learning it?

➢ How do research and creative activity provide context for your teaching?

➢ How does your identity/background inform your teaching?

➢ How will you create an inclusive learning environment?

➢ What pedagogical approaches and tools do you use, and why?

➢ How does your teaching reflect your philosophy of teaching?
Resources


Teaching Statements, https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-statements/