Research and Teaching Statements

A **research statement** is a common application component for academic or scientific positions. The purpose of this essay is to **summarize your research accomplishments and focus** and to provide a roadmap of where you'll go in the future. These are often one to two pages in length.

- **YOUR GOAL ...**
  is to convince a committee that you are a great fit for their department—that your research will fit their needs, you can bring in funding and you will represent the organization well. Show a track record of what you've done as a predictor of what you are capable of.

- **YOU WANT ...**
  to demonstrate strategy and innovation. Always keep in mind, why does what I do matter? How does it serve the world? How does it fill a unique need or niche? Many researchers are skilled at communicating the technical details of their work but not their unique impact. This is no place to be humble.

- **REMEMBER THAT ...**
  reviewers will have different levels of expertise in the field. Be sure to explain technical matters in a digestible way. Also, use informative headers, clear transitions and organization to help reviewers follow your arguments.

Possible Research Statement Content:

1. A summary of your research and how it contributes to the broader field.

2. Specific examples that illustrate your results and impacts (e.g., major publications, breakthroughs, unique techniques you employ).

3. Who you've collaborated with or will collaborate with in your field or the new department.

4. Funding history and potential (identify real possible funders to help reviewers visualize your plan).

5. Where you're going with your scholarly work in the future, how you will build on current results and your specific goals for the next three to five years.

The **teaching statement** aims to **paint a picture of who you are as an educator** for academic positions where teaching will be a large or small component. It should focus on your teaching results, your goals, your values and details of the environments/modalities/methods you've taught in. They are often one to two pages in length.

- **YOUR GOAL ...**
  is to help a department visualize you contributing to a positive learning environment at their institution as well as the unique teaching talents and experience you bring.

- **YOU WANT ...**
  to demonstrate efficacy as an educator, your experience, unique methods you've used and how you interact with students.

- **REMEMBER THAT ...**
  this statement should capture who you are as an educator. Avoid clichés like "students don't learn through lecture." Instead talk specifically about your experiences in the classroom and how you personally build content that engages students.

Possible Teaching Statement Content:

1. Evidence of your teaching effectiveness (student reviews and comments, problem solving you've done, how you assess your success).

2. The details of your teaching (specific courses, assignments, samples from syllabi, use of technology).

3. Inclusive teaching practices (diversity of methods, intercultural sensitivity, trainings you've taken, populations you've worked with).

4. The classroom environment you establish (modes of teaching, student-teacher interaction, student roles).

5. How you are challenging the status quo and bringing innovation into the classroom.

6. How you plan to keep growing as an educator and what you can offer to the department going forward.

7. If the word "philosophy" feels vague, try answering these questions: Why do you teach your subject? How have you found students learn best? How do you translate your subject for different learners? What makes your style yours?

Oregon State University

Research Statement Sample: Public Policy

RESEARCH SUMMARY

My career has consistently reflected overlapping interests in public policy, governance and the capacity for public sector decisions to influence individuals' opportunities to pursue educational goals, achieve economic independence and participate in their communities. During the first 15 years of my career, I focused heavily on applied research, especially program evaluation, typically in the traditional social policy arena including human services, workforce development and education. I began doctoral studies to conduct scholarly research about the policy process and its impacts. In particular, I investigated how policy actors influence government decisions via stakeholder and interest group mobilization—further, how policy decisions differentially impact low-income and disadvantaged communities. My scholarly record aligns well with the multiple Berkley faculty focusing on social justice scholarship and policy effects on underserved populations.

While I have a strong background in social policy, including poverty/self-sufficiency and long-term services policies, I have also engaged in several studies related to current environmental and energy policy issues, reflecting an interest in how policies change in the face of ongoing economic and climatic shifts. I take a multi-disciplinary approach to research, and my work reflects a commitment to using rigorous qualitative and quantitative methods. As a fellow with the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships Program (NSF-GRFP), I had the unique opportunity to participate in multiple supplementary research projects that matched my interests and educational needs. Given this experience with obtaining federal funding and contributing to several successful faculty grant proposals, I'm confident I can obtain grants from foundations such as MacArthur and Horowitz and build toward more prestigious awards like those with the NSF's Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences division.

During the course of my doctoral program, I engaged in several collaborative research projects with faculty at Oregon State and beyond, yielding multiple co-authored peer-reviewed publications. I have presented at a variety of policy-related conferences, including the American Society of Public Administration (ASPA), the Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) and the American Evaluation Association (AEA) and plan to continue building relationships in the field through these organizations.

CURRENT RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

I am currently engaged in multiple projects at varying stages in the publication process, all of which reflect my overall research mission. My dissertation was focused on understanding the factors that have led to state-level policy changes related to employment and day services for individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disability (I/DD). Since the early 2000s, most states have adopted policies that emphasize competitive, integrated employment (CIE) as the priority outcome for individuals with I/DD, but have done so with substantial variation in policy timing, type, content and magnitude. My dissertation used a case-based, mixed-method approach in the context of the Advocacy Coalition Framework to address the broad research questions of why and how states adopted, or resisted adopting, CIE-focused policy during the last 15 to 20 years.

I found that shifts in the policy mix were associated with coalition-based activity and other subsystem conditions, including stakeholder mobilization, strategic use of framing and narrative, and bureaucratic advocacy. However, the timing of policy change was related to antecedent service levels and shifts in coalition membership. My dissertation yielded a single-authored publication in the Policy Studies Journal and a second manuscript that is currently undergoing peer review.

My primary responsibility as a post-doctoral scholar in the OSU School of Social and Behavioral Sciences is to develop a Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) for the State of Oregon using a combination of national datasets (American Community Survey and Current Population Survey) and state-level administrative data. In the spirit of federal SPM developments, we are using these data to develop a more valid measure of poverty in the state, which will enable us to measure how tax credits, income transfers and other subsidies (e.g., childcare) affect poverty in different demographic groups. This project is being conducted in collaboration with the Oregon Department of Human Services and Employment Department.

In addition to my post-doctoral responsibilities, I am engaged in several other collaborative policy-focused studies, including a comparative study of asset poverty in the U.S. and Canada. It is being prepared for submission to a special issue of Social Policy and Administration, an ongoing study of re-distributional institutions in poor rural and urban communities, an ongoing study of communities' policy innovations in the wake of extreme weather events and a nascent study of systematic use of narratives to influence firearms regulation and immigration policies.

Finally, I am in the planning stages for a new project to examine the variation in timing and content of state-level Earned Income Tax Credit policy adoption in the United States. I'm eager to bring my ongoing areas of inquiry as well as this track record of publication and consistent research productivity to your department. Additionally, I believe my research focus and expertise compliment the ongoing social policy work that Dr. Gonzalez and Dr. Warnick are conducting in disaggregating poverty demographic data. This intersection will yield fruitful collaborations that will advance important societal work.

FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

My future research portfolio will continue to explore the conditions under which policy and governance changes occur, the resources and strategies used by policy actors to achieve policy objectives and the impacts of policy and governance changes. I am particularly interested in contributing to scholarship that explores the development and impact of policy and governance innovations in the context of macro-level changes, such as growing income inequality and climate change.

While the scholarly research interests described above are fairly "academic," I also maintain a continued interest in collaborating with policy actors through applied research contributions, including policy analysis and program evaluation, with the primary objective of producing policy-relevant information for consumption by policymakers and the secondary objective of maintaining a close connection to the field.

Teaching Statement Sample: Earth Sciences

A researcher is a lifelong learner. I am motivated to acquire and create new knowledge, and to share these gains through teaching. As an earth scientist studying the societally-relevant topic of coastal geomorphic change, I'm focused on extending the impact of scholarly work through outreach and engagement with the public. Students are an essential audience as their discoveries will advance science into the future. I believe higher education should be a conduit not just for delivering knowledge and skills, but equipping students to acquire new experiences for themselves. My teaching approach combines an enthusiasm for research, communicating science and inspiring others to pursue a life of inquiry in the natural world. It involves: (1) creating equitable teaching and learning environments, (2) providing students with transformational learning experiences and (3) incorporating best teaching practices into everything I do (including careful, frequent evaluation and revision of my teaching).

(1) I seek to create equitable learning environments. Implicit bias, though subtle and difficult to measure, is pervasive; it hinders the success of many throughout their entire academic careers. As a woman in the physical sciences, I have experienced biases against me first-hand. But as a white scholar, I also know I must use the privilege I have to dismantle socially unjust systems. Teachers have a unique responsibility to recognize social hierarchies, even those students may be unaware of, and mitigate inequity as much as possible. I strive to create learning environments that are equitable, which to me means students are validated, supported and challenged. I have sought intentional learning opportunities to build my skills in areas like communicating within the context of other cultures, using student-centered and culturally-mediated instruction, and viewing myself as a facilitator of education versus its keeper.

An example of applying this knowledge is my work with the Oregon State University (OSU) Science & Math Investigative Learning Experiences (SMILE) program aimed at providing underrepresented Oregon K-12 students with pathway programs to degrees and careers in STEM. My hands-on activities guided high school students, elementary school students and K-12 teachers in the SMILE program through an experiment investigating organic carbon burial in salt marsh cores at the OSU Marine Geology Repository. This experience not only exposed the SMILE students to earth science content often lacking in current K-12 curricula, but also engaged them as aspiring scientists in exciting, societally-relevant research happening in their region.

(2) I seek never to suffer from "narration sickness" wherein teachers are tasked with depositing their information into students [1]. I have witnessed this paradigm often as a student in STEM courses. Too frequently earth science professors approach difficult, socially complex issues, such as those related to climate change, from only the scientific perspective. By not incorporating students' experiences, the significance of the issue is often lost. Higher education, when viewed as a process of critical inquiry performed by students and teachers as equals can be transformative and lead to social change. I therefore teach content centered around discussions on complicated and controversial issues related to earth system processes that draw upon the students' experiences. This form of progressive, problem-solving education provides a means of empowerment for and increases participation by under-represented groups in lifelong learning.

As a GTA for an advanced oceanography course, geological oceanography, I worked to narrow the perceived intellectual gap between myself and students through careful redirection of questions—helping students discover knowledge in themselves and their classmates. Additionally, I elected to learn about difference, power and discrimination through completing inclusive classroom coursework. As part of a supplemental class, I designed a pilot course investigating the intersection of global change, natural resources and socio-economic inequality. As an example lesson plan, I devised a discussion exploring environmental injustice surrounding preparation, mitigation and perception of large storm events, with a focus on Hurricane Katrina. I am eager to deliver this and similar content in my future position.

(3) I strive to incorporate best teaching practices in my classrooms. Despite the challenges of connecting students with their natural environment in online and large-enrollment courses, I feel it's vital to incorporate more of these experiences into our lesson plans to combat poor retention of students in the earth sciences. To hone transformative teaching experience during my graduate degree, I developed and implemented authentic activities that enhanced how students viewed, valued and interacted with their natural environment. As an example, I created lab assignments for a new course for undergraduates wherein students analyzed real-world stream gauge data maintained by the U.S. Geological Survey. The project asked them to examine stream discharge and suspended sediment time series data, develop a research narrative integrating peer-reviewed literature and present their findings. Each student was assigned a different river and given freedom to investigate any aspect of interest related to the record of sediment discharge. This authentic learning experience provided students the opportunity to work with real-world data and to communicate a final research product.

Virtual learning is also becoming increasingly prevalent in today's academic environments. Though these courses are efficient and cost-effective, students are often placed in a passive role. Because it is unlikely that large institutions will reduce class sizes, we as educators must find instructional techniques to increase active and cooperative learning. I have therefore sought opportunities to gain practical strategies to facilitate engaged learning in large-enrollment, online courses. I have assisted in teaching a number of high-enrollment, introductory courses, introductory online courses and writing intensive online courses. These experiences taught me valuable, practical knowledge. I also participated in workshops, seminars and short-courses during my graduate degree.

In an effort to continue improving my teaching skills within the virtual and in-person environment, I have also paid careful attention to assessments I receive from my online students. The importance of self-evaluation cannot be over-stated—simply put, it allows us to understand what has been working and what needs revision to ensure our students' success towards becoming individual thinkers and learners. As an example, for an introductory geology course for graduate students, I evaluated end-of-term student evaluations of my teaching and created a detailed, analytic rubric to incorporate into lab exercises. Not only does this rubric make grading more efficient and less biased, it more clearly states the expectations for the students, who rise to them and improve their performance.

Through my teaching, I strive to provide students with the skills and experience to be independent learners once they have graduated. My ultimate goal is to be a teacher who provides her students with experiential learning that is transformative to their worldviews. I want to be the type of educator that inspires students to become teachers themselves.

[1] Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York, Continuum.