

Teaching Statement

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I have a true passion for teaching and mentoring. Academic life provides me with the opportunity to interact with students and give them the opportunity to explore their interests. It gives me immense satisfaction and joy that I as a professor will have the privilege to take part in the initial stateless of their journey. It will also provide me a platform for improving my own skills both in terms of expressing myself as well as be a great source of research ideas. Below, I talk about my experience in teaching and mentoring as well as my future goals as a teacher.

Teaching Experience

My first experience in teaching began as a teaching assistant for an undergraduate course (CS 498 at UIUC) Cloud Computing. I was a teaching assistant for over 100 students where I created programming assignments, exams, and a final project. I also facilitated discussion and worked closely with groups in order to determine if their projects would be successful. This was a daunting task for a first-year PhD student. However, I learned many things about designing and structuring a course to meet the students needs and abilities while challenging them to grow and reach their potential. The following year, I was tasked with running the Security Reading Seminar (CS 591 at UIUC). This was a different teaching experience, where I mainly served role as facilitator. The goal of this security group is to discuss security research from recent top conferences. It serves as a good opportunity for students to get experience presenting research, for learning about research areas, and to cross-pollinate ideas across fields. This class helped me and other students explore what it means to become an independent scholar. I also participated in the creation of the Coursera Course Cloud Computing Applications. This course is one of many courses in UIUC's Cloud Computing Specialization. This experience was my first exposure to an online course environment and dealing with the scalability of educational materials when teaching over 10,000 students. Even though the development of material was very similar to CS 498, the students were located all over the world and access to the Internet made the distribution of materials more difficult. I learned to use various devOps tools in order to distribute the materials to students all over the world, as well as provide assistance to students with varying levels of technical expertise. In the following years, I also served as a teaching assistant for (CS 498s at UIUC) for both Digital Forensics I and Digital Forensics II. Each course I served as both substitute lecturer, lab assistant and teaching assistant. This was my first opportunity to lecture in front of a group of students and interact with them in a teaching student manner. I conducted office hours that allowed me to interact with students individually and get their feedback on various issues. For example, I learned many students looked through the class slides before class. I took to ensure that I will make my teaching slides available beforehand. I find teaching very challenge but also rewarding. I am hoping to translate all this valuable experience into practice when I teach courses.

Mentoring Experience

My passion for teaching extends into the area of mentoring, and my approach is focused on direct engagement and practice of the things I expect my students to learn. In working with students, advising must be holistic. It is my job to learn and understand each student and do my best to facilitate opportunities for direct engagement with students. I also believe that autonomy is essential for an individuals as well as. I worked with an undergraduate student, Steve Nagy, who I worked with, was accepted to Virginia Tech for a Ph.D. program.

I ran into many challenges as a doctoral student, most of which were overcome by some form of tacit rule that can be informally specified and taught. My goal is to educate both undergraduate and graduate students and join them in their journey as they become independent scholars and give them all the keys to success I can provide.

Plans for the Future

Computer science is a practical field. Based on my own experience and from the feedback provided by students I believe that students should have hands-on experience in building as well as the fundamental understanding of the subject. For the undergraduate level, I am interested in building a world-class security program which allows students to take the necessary first steps in to this domain. This includes creating and teaching introduction to security courses and labs to provide students with hand-ons real-world experience. For graduate level, I am interested in teaching advanced security courses with a focus on developing projects. Students are exposed to a lot of options to pursue at a very early stage and hence decide on their career paths. As a passionate researcher in the field of security, I believe that it is my duty to expose them to the joys of research and help future scientists as early as possible.