

**PERSONAL STATEMENT**  
**NTT PROMOTION**  
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**OVERVIEW**

When my students ask me about my government career spanning more than 20 years prior to becoming a professor, I seize upon the opportunity to explain to them that I am *still* in public service as a state university professor. The difference now is that I serve at the intersection of their lives as they bridge from their full-time educational pursuits to their own public service careers in health, policy, or planning. Soon, they, like me, will share a commitment to improving the lives of others, whether it is helping someone gain confidence in their abilities by reasoning their way through a quantitative analysis or enhancing community health outcomes. Whatever their contributions, they, like me, came to Bloustein to try to change the world. It is advice I hope is empowering, encouraging, and emphasizes the privilege of having careers in public service.

It is also advice that I take to heart as I endeavor to be the best professor I can be, both inside and outside the classroom. To ensure my classroom instruction encourages learning, I avail myself of new teaching strategies promoted through the University and I immerse myself in the literature, particularly methodological studies that align with the focus of the undergraduate courses that I teach. I augment my teaching with an active research agenda in survey design, gendered leadership, and policy analysis. I have found that my research has enriched my effectiveness in the classroom, particularly as a methods professor. Moreover, this research serves to advance my professional development and provides me with opportunities to extend applied research experiences to our undergraduate and graduate students. Experiential learning outside the classroom is as valuable an asset as the courses we teach. It is why I am committed to providing these opportunities to as many of my students as possible through internships, independent studies, student sponsored-research opportunities, career networks, and referrals.

In January 2020, I began my fourteenth year of teaching at the Bloustein School. Prior to earning my Ph.D. in Planning and Public Policy, I was a Part-time Lecturer (PTL) teaching in the undergraduate program. I also served as a Teaching Assistant and as a PTL at Bloustein and in the School of Arts and Sciences. I have completed nine years as a full-time instructor and assistant professor in teaching.

My academic preparation included rigorous courses in planning and policy theory, quantitative and qualitative methods, and applied policy areas (such as public policy formation, public finance, political institutions, and gendered leadership in state politics). These preparations have

provided an opportunity for me to hone my pedagogical skills, supplemented by teaching instruction offered through the Teaching and Learning with Technology (TLT) unit in Rutgers' Division of Continuing Studies and The Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research (CTAAR).

My rigorous and comprehensive academic preparations, combined with my teaching, research, and policy experiences in practice, converge to enhance my ability to inform, engage, and challenge students within the classroom setting.

## TEACHING

As I convey to my students, I believe teaching is an extension of my public service career. Making public policy is largely about identifying policy problems, developing appropriate policy responses, and effectively communicating ideas to develop consensus for action. Now, rather than being directly involved in formulating or implementing public policy, I instruct students who aspire to careers in the private, public, and non-profit sectors. To date, I have taught more than 1800 Bloustein School undergraduate and graduate students, with a focus on our undergraduate program.

My current course load includes seven courses during the academic year. This course load typically comprises six 4-credit *Research Methods* courses that includes a computing lab component, along with one 3-credit course. I am the only full-time Bloustein professor that teaches *Research Methods* in three modalities: traditional face-to-face setting, online, and hybrid. For the undergraduate *Research Methods* courses, I designed the curriculum for the hybrid and online methods instruction. During the last three years, I was also asked to flip the hybrid instruction from an online lecture/in-person lab to an in-person lecture/online lab, a major course redesign. These non-traditional courses were fully enrolled between Fall 2017 through Spring 2020.

Of note, I instructed two online sections of *Research Methods* during the Fall 2019 term. Since these courses are offered asynchronously, questions are typically asked and answered by email, phone, and text messages. My combined contact efforts last semester amounted to fielding more than 450 emails during the month of December alone, in addition to making myself available to students through texts (100+) and holding 50 to 85 phone conversations over the course of the term. These non-traditional contacts regularly occur outside the weekly scheduled office hours as the online cohort needs responses to questions as they are completing assignments that occur during a 24 hour/7-day course schedule. I also facilitate virtual face-to-face meetings with students enrolled in the online curriculum that include Google Hangouts, Adobe Connect, and more recently Webex. This expanded format enables distance-learners to participate in an office hour meeting in which I can share screens and content, simulating a virtual white board, without the need for them to travel to campus.

### *Teaching Philosophy*

My teaching philosophy is to hone students' critical thinking and analytical skills by providing them with a balanced learning experience that includes theoretical or empirically rich content, as well as hands-on experience that helps students assimilate knowledge. With my public policy background, I am committed to infusing "real world" policy experiences and examples into my instruction. Whether I am teaching a theory course or an empirical methods course, I draw upon my own experiences from state and federal government service to illustrate and supplement the traditional instruction. In some cases, I utilize current news reports from traditional or social media to center the debate; in other instances, I tap into my career "Rolodex" to invite guest lecturers from government, the media, and the non-profit, private, and academic sectors to offer their insights. Guest lecturer sessions are structured in a seminar format so that students can have one-on-one interactions with these subject-matter experts to assess the application of theoretical concepts they have studied, as well as debate nuanced aspects of government policy agendas. I also rely on case studies to anchor discussion topics on issues such as public finance or the function and form of government. For analytical courses, I rely upon published research studies to explore examples of reliability, validity, and generalizability.

In my longer three-hour research lecture settings, I incorporate "active learning" through small group interactions and "online learning communities." For lecture settings, these small group interactions generate a natural feedback loop for me to help build relationships among the students, who work in a group for their final research project. In addition to teaching critical thinking, I place significant emphasis on application-based assessments in which the professional skills required (e.g., public speaking, memo writing, researching, drafting policy briefs, and accessing and analyzing data) are practiced.

Of course, I also make use of more conventional teaching and evaluation methods; however, I generally limit multiple choice assessments to small quizzes used to help students pace themselves and readily assess their progress. My in-class activities and homework assignments focus on tasks that allow students to demonstrate their competencies by designing interview questionnaire guides, collecting observations about social behaviors and norms in a local setting, and downloading and summarizing datasets from the U.S. Census Bureau. I also generate student participation and engagement by designing content-specific classroom activities such as a Jeopardy power point game that drills students on threats to validity and experimental design or estimating probability outcomes by employing samples using Mars M&M candies. I also require my *Research Methods* students to obtain their CITI Human Subjects Certification as part of ethics training and to secure a credential they may need in their subsequent internships.

### *Experiential Learning*

During my public service career working on policy issues in the executive and legislative branches, I was committed to establishing “experiential learning” opportunities for college interns as well as new graduates interested in public policy. In my current role, I endeavor to create those same kinds of mentoring opportunities for my students.

Since joining the faculty as a full-time instructor in January 2011, I have formally supervised 28 students in internships, independent studies, and an interdisciplinary honor thesis. I was one of the first professors at Bloustein to actively engage and offer student internships for students to meet our undergraduate curriculum requirements, at a rate of 1.7 students sponsored each semester since 2011. I also have mentored more than a dozen masters and doctoral students as teaching assistants in methods courses and assisted a dozen graduate students with placements in state government or at research centers. This spring, I am again supervising an undergraduate student completing her public health internship. Letters from former students describing the experiences and benefits gained from these placements are attached to this reappointment package.

### *Curriculum Development*

One of the most challenging aspects of university teaching has been contributing to the curriculum redesign of the undergraduate *Research Methods* course from the face-to-face modality to a fully online format. While students must have a basic understanding of statistics as a prerequisite for enrolling in the course, the majority lack any computer acumen in running statistical analyses. To teach the competencies of *Research Methods* in an online environment, which includes instruction on the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), I developed short video tutorials that instruct students about how to open a dataset, run descriptive and inferential statistics, and interpret and analyze SPSS output. For those undergraduates who do not have access to SPSS software in the labs, I created a suite of instructional videos that help students to access the SPSS software in a virtual environment. While I do not expect the students to finish this course as statistical software experts, a significant degree of competency is required.

From 2017 to 2019, I worked with a team of instructors under the direction of Dr. Jane Miller to ensure that our undergraduate *Research Methods* curriculum is delivered with standardized learning goals and outcomes as required under the Council on Education for Public Health’s (CEPH) certification. To ensure consistency across multiple sections, the instructors of all sections of the course convened over several months to ensure uniformity in syllabi, instructional methods, and common assessment rubrics with the findings to be presented to an Assessment Working Group. This group met on a semester basis through the Spring 2019 term to share new strategies among the Methods instruction team.

During my full-time tenure at Bloustein, I redesigned the undergraduate *Principles of Public Policy* course into a hybrid format. In *Principles*, the online component is student-led each week to sharpen online presentation skills. The in-person class sessions comprise guest lecturers, case

studies, and oral presentations by teams of students. I have also redesigned a comparable format for *Introduction to Planning, Public Policy & Health* when I was asked to instruct the course just prior to the term beginning. I also served on a committee to revise the undergraduate *Principles of Public Policy* course so that it meets the criteria for six School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) Core Curricular goals.

## RESEARCH

I believe that to be a stellar university professor, one must remain active as a researcher, particularly as a *Research Methods* professor who instructs two to three methods courses per term. Moreover, these roles have advanced my professional development and provide me with the opportunity to extend applied research experiences to our undergraduate and graduate students, which I detail below.

My research interests focus on governing in the states and survey methodology. I am co-author of *The Politics of Regulatory Reform* with Dr. Stuart Shapiro, published October 2013 by Routledge Publishers. The book argues that the regulatory process and its influence on the economy are widely misunderstood by the public and policymakers alike. It concludes that the politics of regulatory reform is much more about politics than it is about improving regulation. This research was extended through a grant funded by the University of Texas Center for Politics & Governance (CPG) that surveyed business leaders across the nation on the current regulatory climate and Trump administration regulatory reforms.

As a *Research Methods* instructor, I also believe it is important to stay abreast of the practice and engage in activities that extend my own skills and knowledge. I currently serve as the Senior Survey Scholar and co-adjunct at the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling. Here, I manage survey design studies of academic, non-profit, and governmental organizations on projects ranging from assessing client needs, estimating project costs, obtaining Rutgers Institutional Review Board approval, establishing a sampling plan, developing the survey instrument, ensuring quality control of data collection operations, directing the data analysis, and preparing the client deliverables.

### *Professional Development*

The CEPH site visit team members recommended that professional development among the non-tenure track faculty be encouraged and expanded. To meet this objective, I regularly participate in short courses and webinars offered through professional organizations with which I am affiliated, attend and present at academic conferences, serve as a peer reviewer for scholarly presses on research in my area, as well as publish and actively engage in research as a principal investigator or co-principal investigator.

I endeavor to participate at one or more academic conferences annually, most often at the American Association for Public Opinion Research Conference (AAPOR) or the Association for Public

Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM). At a recent AAPOR conference, I presented two papers, along with my colleague Dr. Ashley Koning, analyzing the 2016 presidential election. One paper analyzed data from empaneled voters in five key electoral states to assess whether there were silent “Trump voters” who were muting responses to pollsters about their favorability and support for his candidacy. The second paper examined “interviewer effect” among New Jersey adults to assess whether respondents offered biased answers based on the gender or race of the interviewer and the respondent. In January 2020, my paper titled “Is the Female Elected Class of 2018 Different from their Predecessors” was accepted for presentation at the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual AAPOR conference in Atlanta, Georgia. This research directly builds on my dissertation research that examined women leaders through 2010 and their attitudes, behaviors, and policy preferences.

### *Student Research*

In addition to aiding me in meeting my professional goals, my research also benefits Bloustein students (undergraduate and graduate) by providing them with research opportunities and publication acknowledgements. I create unique research experiences related to projects in their field for many of the interns who serve on the research projects I direct as a Principal or Co-Principal Investigator, including our Public Health, Health Administration, and Public Policy majors. The accepted APPOR paper, referenced above, is the research project focus of my current public health intern, who is interested in exploring the intersection of female leadership and the public policy agenda.

Recent projects include student participation in one of the longest running longitudinal community studies focused on community health and the effectiveness of program delivery among a significant Hispanic population where Spanish is the primary language spoken in the home. Another student project included assessing the social, emotional, and financial stress on families in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. Recently, students participated in two federally funded Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) longitudinal studies measuring the attitudes, behaviors and consumption patterns of alcohol, tobacco, pharmaceutical, and other drugs among 18 to 25-year-old adults living in Indiana and Kansas.

On the afternoon and evening of November 5, 2018, the day of the historic mid-term elections in the United States, I recruited and led a volunteer team of 15 undergraduate and graduate students to Edison Research, the national exit polling company located in Somerset, New Jersey. Our students participated in the collection and validation of congressional precinct election data, prior to its release to the national media. In addition to the training they received to participate in fielding the nation’s largest cluster poll, our students had a front row seat to history as the 2018 mid-term elections were reported. For my undergraduate *Research Methods* students who participated, and had just completed their module on survey design, they witnessed first-hand how data is validated prior to its public release and the steps taken to ensure reliability during the data collection phase.

## SERVICE

Since 2014, I served as a member of the Bloustein CEPH accreditation team. I attended workshop meetings, contributed to drafting a report related to student evaluations along with Dean Steve Weston, met with the CEPH site team on two occasions, and provided proof-reading edits on the final report as needed. To meet the CEPH accreditation on programmatic assessment and evaluation (Criterion 5.4), I regularly conducted focus groups of the Public Health curriculum among my Research Methods students before these formal assessments were consolidated within the school.

I designed the studies, wrote the questionnaire guide, trained the facilitators and note-takers, and oversaw the report provided semi-annually to Dean Weston. For the required focus group studies, I collaborated with Dr. Marci Berger to evaluate student preferences for core or certification programs in the majors.

I was also part of a faculty workgroup that met to develop a standardized course curriculum for undergraduate Independent Studies. This group also made recommendations to the undergraduate faculty to develop an Honors Thesis curriculum within the Bloustein School.

### *Evaluation & Course Redesign*

In 2017, I was appointed by Interim Dean Mike Greenberg to the Bloustein Teaching Evaluation and Mentoring (TEAM) project that is part of a Rutgers-New Brunswick initiative to improve teaching evaluations. I led the experimental design component for student course evaluations at the school that measured whether new proposed questions and/or the order of these questions impacted the two standardized metrics for assessing course quality and instructor quality by students. Students from my *Research Methods* sections were included in this piloted study as part of one of their course lab applications focused on survey design and cognitive interviews.

In the past, I adapted all my Sakai courses to ensure that they met the University's standards for accommodating students with visual impairments. In response to the directive to move our courses to the Canvas learning management system, I began this migration during the summer of 2019. Due the complexity of the online course layout for *Research Methods*, which includes multiple video lectures, audio, power point lecture slides, quizzes, and assignments per week, I was asked to work with a senior instructional designer at TLT to assist with the migration of the course to Canvas. I began this initiative during the summer and scheduled two instructional sessions to assist with the organization of the course material since the Sakai format of the module course design did not convert into Canvas. This work continued through the Fall semester (2019).

Once the migration and reorganization were completed, I advanced an initiative to redesign the online format of the course after attending several TLT instructional meetings at Bloustein where I learned about new tools and online teaching strategies. Last semester, I began a project with a

recommended instructional designer who specializes in online instruction. One of my goals is to extend the “active learning exercises” in my face-to-face lectures to an online format that is accessible to a student cohort who participate in the course asynchronously. Another goal is to ensure that I am utilizing “best practices” instructional strategies and tools developed at the University for online course content.

I am committed to participating in student-sponsored activities such as Bloustein’s Public Service Association’s (BPSA) bi-annual networking events with faculty and staff. I have been an invited guest speaker at two of BPSA’s monthly meetings to reflect on public service careers in which more than 100 students were in attendance. I also volunteer in BPSA’s faculty-student mentoring program, serve as a reviewer at Bloustein’s undergraduate Intern Poster sessions, regularly write letters of recommendation to potential employers, and serve as a reference for graduate school applications on behalf of my students. I have accepted invitations from more than 1,000 Bloustein students on LinkedIn as the networking opportunities do not end when they graduate. As evidenced by some of the support letters from former students, I am privileged to remain actively involved in the graduate pursuits of our students as well as career placement and counseling sessions.

On a school-wide basis, I also serve on ad hoc committees to evaluate undergraduate student awards and scholarships. Likewise, I have facilitated panel discussions for graduate forums. I am also a member of the Work-Life Balance Committee appointed by the Faculty Council.

## **CONCLUSION**

Fundamentally, education is about empowerment. As the first member of my family to graduate from college and the only one with a graduate degree, I am uniquely positioned to understand how education supported my own career opportunities in life. I find that my most impactful exchanges with students occur across the desk or in a coffee shop in one-on-one advising sessions. I am saddened when a student tells me “no one ever told me that I’m good at something” and buoyed when she says that, “I am going to stop listening to those who tell me I can’t follow my dreams and start believing in myself.”

Overall, I believe I have demonstrated strengths in teaching and mentoring of both undergraduate and graduate students for the Bloustein School. I am flexible in responding to students’ needs, and comfortable teaching in multiple modes. Moreover, I continue to strengthen my teaching through instructional support provided through the University and I keep my skills current by engaging in ongoing policy and survey research.

As such, I respectfully request consideration for promotion to Associate Professor of Teaching.