

Abbreviated Teaching Statement

Ryan C. Blair

As a teacher, I am inspired by the personal connections I make with students, by seeing my students succeed and by igniting in others a love for the subject. I create a classroom environment rich with the open exchange of ideas and active student participation. Through the integration of technology, manipulatives, class discussions and group work, I make my classroom dynamic. I maintain both high standards and high student achievement through rigorous assessment of student learning, backwards mapping and scaffolding.

I have been honored to receive accolades for excellence in teaching from both my students and math departments. At the University of Pennsylvania, I was twice awarded the Mathematics Department Good Teaching Award for my undergraduate course on point-set topology and my calculus III course. At the University of California at Santa Barbara, I was honored with the Mathematics Graduate Student Teaching Award from the Department of Mathematics for my lower-division course on differential equations and linear algebra.

I have been active in course creation, course redesign and professional development. I have developed a new advanced undergraduate course on knot theory which benefits students by exposing them to key ideas in topology and geometry and prepares them to work on research projects with me. I have created multiple independent study courses for both graduate students and undergraduate students and these students have presented their research via poster presentations and research talks. My course offerings have been diverse including lower-division undergraduate, advanced undergraduate and graduate level courses. Through programs like the Faculty Learning Community, I am constantly improving my teaching techniques and striving to foster student success.

Students genuinely respond to the encouraging and welcoming classroom culture that I build. As evidence, my calculus III course was the second highest rated by students amongst the 23 calculus courses taught at the University of Pennsylvania in the Spring of 2012. For the complete copy of the student evaluations for this course, visit my website at <http://web.csulb.edu/~rblair/>

Additionally, I am dedicated to educating outside of the classroom. I am passionate about creating opportunities for underrepresented groups to help them reach their higher education goals. I have secured grant money to offer underrepresented undergraduates rigorous research experiences. It is my goal to increase accessibility to Ph.D. programs for CSULB students by offering them the high-caliber research experiences. Toward this end, I have integrated my research into my teaching in a way that strengthens both facets of my position and benefits students. I am happy to report that I have already been successful in helping mentor talented students toward Ph.D. programs.