Philosophy of Teaching –

I believe that a Costume Design education (or any theatrical education) should be about crafting the diverse confident individual that stands out in a crowd and not creating a designer who plays a part in the world of the normal. I have found that so many programs find a formula that creates what they want designers to be and then expect the individual to form to that mold. I think the opposite. My philosophy of teaching revolves around the idea that students need to discover themselves as unique individual artists first. By doing that, it will push them and their peers, out of their comfort zones to create unbelievable work that even surprises themselves. This is the driving point for how I would structure a program and bring in diverse students that productively contribute to our world of storytelling in new and exciting ways. By creating an environment where the diversity and individual is celebrated, kept intact, and then molded, we ensure that we are creating a wider variety of designers for our future and can become a leading program that creates designers people want to collaborate with.

When beginning the journey with any student, we begin by examining who they are and how we can continue to push uniqueness and marketability into their art. I make them ask themselves four questions: What is it I want to be? What do I <u>want</u> to create? What am I <u>willing</u> to create? What will it take for me to get there and succeed/be happy? These may seem simple to answer, but they never are for most students. This journey is always full of self-discoveries with some frustrations, but it has to be self-inflicted to truly be beneficial. This business is hard, and this journey not only betters the student but also prepares them for what is ahead. Once there is some grounding in who they are, within themselves, the world of possibilities really opens up. I am very honest on day one. My classes are hard, and they may see something in the "designer mirror" they don't like, and that is ok.

My students learn design and technology by doing design and production through all projects. Connecting multiple courses together continues to implant these skills more securely into their minds. If we design a show in design class, they will build items from those designs in another class for production. Each thing we do relates to the next, so they are understanding process and finding where they need work to develop themselves. As a working professional, I have found what makes me a fantastic designer is not what I learned in school, specifically, but it is what I learned while doing design, so my goal is to recreate that within school, which is something that has not fully been accomplished in our current systems of art education. Imagine a world where students don't have to wait for the fire to become prepared. I want to bring as much of the real world into the programing so that it's not as much of a shock when students leave the umbrella of the school.

Learning how to be inspired is also a large part of my teaching, as well as my research. A part of all of my classes, is a weekly inspiration journal (done throughout the program in all classes) as well as listening to podcasts of real working professionals giving their experience. This helps with not only connecting to real life designers, but creates an ability to see other perspectives and lift diversity. I can say one thing as a teacher but hearing it multiple times from other sources helps ground the information. I usually begin the classes with a round table of these journal images and discussions. I feel that when we bring something that inspires us, to the table, there is a hope that it inspires others in ways that they never thought they could be. This continues my thought of by

building the individuality we strengthen the group. Along these lines, I also require my students to constantly be seeing theater and films. In order to be the best in their field, they MUST know what's going on in their field. To do this, they must be up to date on current design trends and story structures.

Currently, I teach 9-12 credits a semester in Costume Design, Costume Production, History of Costume and Décor, Rendering, and innovative curriculum for Industry integration that pushes the norms in many schools. This Industry curriculum has become a huge passion of mine and formed my research not only as a designer but at my university. Another goal of mine is to constantly be re-working all of my curriculum to allow for my pedagogy to constantly change and allow diversity and our community into the classroom. During covid-19, this has truly tested this theory. I have written multiple courses that have now become standard practice in our program and truly heightened our ability to give realistic coursework in the classroom that reflects our world more accurately. I am very proud of my work with organizations that promote diverse and inclusive education and mentorships to underrepresented designers from around the country. As you can see in my CV as well as my Diversity Statement, these organizations have really helped me round out my viewpoints and perspectives I bring into my classroom. These along with continued education in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion education are just a small part of ways I have broken the narrative of the classroom. My goal is to become a leader and voice in promoting these inclusive curriculums to students and universities that do not have access to those and lift all students.

Finally, I push myself to practice what I preach. My goal is to always remain current, even in my career as a teacher. I push my students to pursue their art and I would not allow myself to stop my own. On top of continuing to work professionally, my next big journey is to continue my research into how we communicate inspiration, as well as how we best prepare students to overcome their entrance into the industry. Currently, I am developing a multimedia-based platform that allows students across the country to corresponded and be inspired by each other's processes and unique talents. Not only will this bring more diverse information into each of those programs, but it also allows students to have a platform that is peer to peer rather than professor to student. This platform would also allow students to transition into the working world, because they will automatically be connected to industry and other students going through the same moments. Each designer's journey is different, and this platform would allow them to craft that to what it needs to be for them. This is currently being developed and my hope is to find a program that encourages this and helps support me in this development.