Teaching Statement

Attached are my first two reports from the Promotion, Evaluation and Tenure committee in my department, as well as the most recent data from my student evaluation surveys.

The Department of Speech Communication P.E.T. committee relies most heavily on question number 20: “All things considered, how would you rate the instructor’s performance?” As you can see, my overall average percentage of “As” and “Bs” for Q20 is 77. My lowest rating on this question in the fall semester came from my students in SPE-101, our introduction to theory and research course, which I was teaching for the first time.

I’ve been with Kutztown’s department of Speech and Theatre for three years. I started as a temporary instructor. In the first five semesters I was here, I taught seven different courses. The load at KU is 4-4. I’ve developed one course anew, the Rhetoric of Visual Media. I also was the first person to teach the New Media and Communication course here (the syllabus was developed prior to my arrival.) I’ve taught an introduction to Public Relations, the advanced theory course, the introductory theory and research course, the mass media survey course and our general education basic course, and Introduction to Oral Communication. My department does not teach journalism craft courses – that is the territory of KU’s English department.

When I started my PhD program at Annenberg I did not anticipate becoming a full-time professor; I thought I was headed for think tank work. I found the air in the classroom, however, seems to have more oxygen. I love teaching – not every single day, not every single student – but I’m happier with my role in the media world than I’ve ever been.

What I’ve learned in the past three years is not a matter of curriculum or material. I’ve learned that first and foremost, effective teaching is rooted in the relationship one develops with students. I no longer encourage my students to visit during office hours, I require it. I’ve learned to appreciate their struggles and their lives outside the classroom and our mutual challenges with campus life. I appreciate my problem students as much as my “A” students. Teaching at a public institution is comes with an extraordinary fringe benefit: We have a chance to change people’s lives. I consider that a tremendous privilege.