

## 1. Teaching Philosophy

Effective teaching philosophies do more than talk about the faculty member's beliefs about teaching and learning, they talk about students and provide examples of how they enact elements of their philosophy in the courses they teach. Does the philosophy:

- Convey a passion for and interest in teaching and students' learning?
- Focus on students and learning (or does it focus primarily on the content and the faculty member)?
- Recognize that some students lack opportunities & resources that contribute to success in higher education?
- Mention use of effective, engaging, and inclusive teaching strategies?
- Include examples of learning activities that meaningfully engage students in their learning?
- Communicate respect for students' identities and backgrounds and their class contributions?
- Show that the faculty member gets to know their students as individuals in online or face-to-face contexts?

**Teaching Philosophy Points (out of 5):**

## 2. Undergraduate Teaching Improvement Activities & Service

Has the faculty member provided evidence of:

- Contributions to creating a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for students from underrepresented groups?
- Continuous learning/professional development to improve teaching and students' learning?
- Involvement in curricular improvements, including those addressing inclusiveness and equity?
- Developed teaching innovations, resources, or materials that improve student learning?
- Shared teaching and learning expertise with others?
- Collaborated with other faculty or students on teaching and learning improvement projects?
- Served on teaching and learning committees?
- Made teaching and learning presentations at conferences or to colleagues at Penn State?
- Published on teaching and learning?
- Contributed to the implementation of student learning outcomes assessment in their unit, program, or field?

**Biographical Sketch Points (out of 5):**

## 3. Letters of Support

Good letters of support communicate more than simply whether the faculty member is an expert or deserves an award. Effective letters of support indicate why the faculty member's teaching is *exceptional*.

Do the letters:

- Represent a diversity of students, not just those who have worked for/with the faculty member?
- Indicate that the faculty member respects students and their contributions in class?
- Note that the faculty member creates an inclusive learning environment for students of different types and backgrounds?
- Show that the faculty member engages all students in the learning process by using varied teaching methods?
- Mention that the faculty member gathers student feedback about their learning or course experiences?

**Letters Points** (out of 5):**4. Example Syllabus**

Excellent teaching involves more than mastery of course content, it includes course design that enables student learning, using multiple teaching methods. Does the syllabus:

- Focus on the students and their learning (not just the course content or the instructor)?
- Communicate clear learning expectations or [explicit learning objectives](#)?
- Ensure that all students have access to the same resources and information to succeed?
- Acknowledge diverse learners and respect what each brings to the course and create opportunities for students to get to know and learn from each other?
- Clearly align student work (e.g., in-class activities, assignments, exams) with course learning objectives
- Apply principles of [Universal Design for Learning](#) to ensure course accessibility?
- Provide a variety of ways for students to succeed and demonstrate their learning?
- Include opportunities for students to make unique contributions?
- Include indications that student input is valued and provide opportunities for student feedback?
- Embody or actualize the candidate's teaching philosophy?

**Syllabus Points** (out of 5):**5. Example Assignment** (same course as syllabus)

Does/is the assignment:

- Reflect and align with at least one student learning objective?
- Allow students to demonstrate the kind of and level of thinking described in the syllabus?
- Provide clear, student-focused learning expectations and directions (or does it focus primarily on course content)?
- Involve students using or applying course content?

**Assignment Points** (out of 5):**Total Points** (out of 25):**Eisenhower Candidates ONLY** (score only candidates eligible for an Eisenhower award)

Please make note of examples from the packet that demonstrate the faculty member has:

- A career-long commitment to improving teaching and learning
- Mentored other Penn State faculty, especially junior faculty at Penn State
- Shared their teaching expertise with the academic community, within and outside of Penn State

**Candidate:**

Atherton & Eisenhower Teaching Awards 2026

**Eisenhower Points** (out of 5):