Sharon A. Aiken-Wisniewski
Statement of Teaching Interests and Objectives

My teaching experiences covers graduate and undergraduate courses in student affairs and higher education administration, leadership, and student transition issues. This statement will address curricular areas of interest for teaching and pedagogical methods to accomplish learning.

Course Content & Curriculum
 First, I organize courses through a social justice lens. My pedagogical choices would encourage students to critically evaluate theory and practice to recognize barriers and discuss strategies to empower marginalized groups. Second, through my teaching, research, and professional experiences, I am capable of teaching courses on college student development theory, student identity development, retention theory, organizational theory in higher education, leadership theory, change management theory, program evaluation and assessment, academic advising practice, and enrollment management practice. Third, my research agenda has focused on qualitative inquiry. My understanding of various strategies and methods would result in a course that was informed by leading experts as well as my lived experience.   Also, my administrative roles have generated an understanding of both quantitative and qualitative methods for program evaluation and assessment. One activity that has strengthened my understanding in this area is an on-going invitation to participate as faculty in the NACADA Assessment Institute for the last five years. I approach this experience with a blended agenda for sharing my knowledge on assessment techniques as I learn from practitioners in the field about their assessment experiences.

Pedagogical Methods
The act of teaching is an opportunity to dialogue, exchange ideas, and appreciate the complexity of knowing. Paulo Freire in _Pedagogy of The Oppressed_ encourages leaders in education to not dichotomize the act of learning into structured roles between teacher and student. Instead, dialogue as a teaching method done well, fosters a pedagogical practice that blends these roles for a true exchange between all present. This is how I organize a classroom experience. I view classroom discussions that focus on combining theory and the lived experience to be essential for learning course content. In addition to drawing upon the philosophies of Freire in teaching, I also draw upon the work of David Kolb as I engage students. The cycle of learning that includes a concrete experience, reflecting on that experience which results in abstract concepts, and then applying these concepts again to new and appropriate experiences connects students to a an active process that impacts cognition and offers a location to create and share knowledge.

Let me share some examples of activities that blend the concepts proposed by Freire and Kolb. I utilize technology tools, such as *Blackboard Vista* and *PowerPoint*, in the learning process. This semester, I have blended discussion and technology to use a blog format that encourages students to document their understanding of college student development theories on multiple cognitive levels. As far as blending the teacher-student identity, students assume responsibility for understanding, teaching, and creating activities for various theories and concepts in a particular content area. Another excellent tool is the case study. Written by practitioners, scholars, and students, it offers an opportunity to apply theory to practice. And finally, media in the form of movies, literature, and *UTube* offers an opportunity to identify theories and concepts through

simulated behaviors and actions before confronting these same situations in the higher education environment. These are only a few activities that explain my approach to teaching that draw upon Freire and Kolb. I am confident in my ability to facilitate quality learning experiences that address the mission and learning outcomes of an academic organization.

I would welcome the assignment of a content area that was not listed above to continue my intellectual development. Also, I will continue to enhance teaching methods through emerging technology tools as well as engagement with colleagues across the campus on how to facilitate learning within the classroom.

References

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed – 30th Anniversary Edition*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc.

Kolb, D.A. (2000). *Facilitator's guide to learning*. Boston: Hay/McBer Publishers.

Kolb, D. A., Boyatzis, R.E., & Mainemelis, C. (2001). Experiential learning theory: Previous research and new directions. In R. J. Sternberg & L. Zhang (Eds.), *Perspectives on thinking, learning, and cognition styles* (pp. 227-247). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.