Kwabena Krah  
Teaching Statement

My goal as a teacher is to help students learn by communicating and prioritizing teamwork, group discussions, and practical examples. I work to convey my enthusiasm for economics and to remain flexible in my methods while encouraging critical thinking.

My experience as a teaching assistant for seven consecutive semesters at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) has provided me with considerable experience teaching and working with students. I have led discussion sections for two undergraduate courses; (1) The World Food Economy and (2) Applied Statistical Methods and Data Analytics. In these discussion sections, I have used a combination of traditional lectures and student participatory strategies, working with students in small groups to complete assigned tasks. I have found that combining these strategies with group projects, individual assignments, quizzes, and examinations helped my students to understand and appropriately apply the course materials and concepts. Further engaging students with practical examples, and using hands-on-exercises with real world data and experiences, enabled students to appreciate and apply the concepts they learned.

I have also found it important in the classroom to be able to adjust materials and teaching methods quickly to accommodate diverse student backgrounds. For instance, when I led discussion sections for the course: “The World Food Economy” at UIUC, I learned quickly that students who signed up for the course were from a range of majors including engineering, agriculture, history, and fine arts. Although the course focused on economic concepts related to the global demand and supply of food, I learned to take the first two meeting sessions to review fundamental concepts such as producer surplus and consumer surplus before advancing to the actual course content. I developed this strategy to ensure that no student was lost and to provide students with an overview or a review of essential concepts. In addition, to ensure continuity throughout the course, I always took the last five minutes at the end of each class session to review student progress in order to guide my focus in the next section. I believe that my style and approach of teaching helped my students, and that explain why I earned campus-wide recognition on UIUC’s List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent by their Students in the Spring of 2019.

I find teaching any course to be a valuable opportunity to grow and learn. I am confident I can teach nearly any area in agricultural and applied economics with time to prepare. I am excited to teach any
undergraduate course in agricultural economics, microeconomics, or applied statistical methods and data analytics as well as applied courses at the graduate level.

I have benefited immensely in my career from being mentored by both more senior graduate students as well as faculty; these relationships have been vital to my development as a scholar. As a teacher, I look forward to mentoring students in their studies and research