

Karen S. Lehman

## Professional Statement

### Teaching

In my role as a professor in higher education, my goal is to inspire students to reach their fullest potential. In the classroom I employ teaching methods that emphasize active engagement, collaboration, and curiosity. I believe that effective teaching goes beyond the mere transmission of knowledge and includes critical thinking skills while cultivating an appreciation for life-long learning. My goal is to make the course material relevant and accessible to students from all backgrounds.

I recognize that adaptability is crucial in teaching, especially in response to the fast-moving world of technology and the evolving needs of students. I believe that regular evaluation is important through both formal and informal means and am willing to adjust my teaching strategies to ensure all students have equal opportunities to succeed.

### Scholarship

I view research as a vehicle that promotes social justice and equity. I will seek out research that has a positive impact on underserved communities and that contributes to the advancement of knowledge in areas such as equity in k-12 education, the impact of trauma on academic success, and the importance of a social work perspective in k-12 schools. Whether through participatory research methods, community-based partnerships or advocacy efforts, I am dedicated to leveraging my research to impact positive change in higher education and in the community.

### Service

In addition to my roles in teaching and research, I am committed to my profession and the social work community through meaningful service activities. I view service as an opportunity to give back, build relationships and contribute to the greater good. I volunteer often to participate in workgroups and committees at my place of employment. As an instructor in higher education I think it is important for professors to join departmental committees, task forces, and other governance structures where I can work collaboratively with colleagues to address issues related to social work and higher education. When approached to mentor a student in their field placement I have always agreed, recognizing the importance of this experience in a student's academic career. In my own community I volunteer with Benchmark, a local mentoring program, and I hosted over 100 roots/Americana concerts in my home between 2012 and 2020 bringing community together with food, music and conversation.

## Diversity Statement

In education it is important for teachers to commit to fostering a classroom environment that is inclusive. By celebrating diversity, educators have the power to enrich the classroom experience for all students. I recognize that diversity encompasses a wide range of identities, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, nationality, ability, and age. I am committed to creating a classroom where all students feel valued, respected, and empowered to express their unique perspectives and experiences.

I believe that social workers should engage anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion in practice, and instructors should do the same in the classroom. To achieve this goal, I actively seek out diverse perspectives in curricula and teaching methods. It is important to me to incorporate readings, case studies and guest speakers that represent a variety of voices and experiences.

I believe that qualified instructors not only seek out diverse perspectives in the classroom but are also committed to addressing systemic inequities within higher education and society at large. I look for ways to advocate for policies and practices that promote equity and inclusion. I support initiatives to recruit and retain diverse faculty and students.

My goal as an instructor is to model critical thinking skills and ways to challenge biases and stereotypes that could perpetuate discrimination. By embracing diversity and fostering an inclusive learning environment, I believe educators have the power to create a brighter future for all individuals, regardless of background or identity. I believe that all students and teachers can be agents of positive change in higher education learning environments and their communities.