Teaching Statement **Yucheng Wang**

My teaching and assessment practices are guided by a research-based, student-centered philosophy that highlights my passion and dedication to my discipline and my students. As a researcher-teacher, I have extensive teaching experience in higher education that includes online and in-person delivery and diverse student populations. I have even had the chance to design and develop two courses that I currently offer at the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt). One of these courses is *Economic Development of China*, an undergraduate course that has attracted enormous interest from students in the Greater Pittsburgh area, including Pitt's School of Public Policy, Carnegie Mellon University, and Chatham University. I also served as a teaching assistant for the PhD-level *Advanced Macroeconomics* course for multiple semesters, and led weekly recitation sessions on theoretical and computation tasks for this course.

My dedication to excellent teaching is reflected in my teaching evaluations. My average teaching effectiveness score for undergraduate-level courses is 4.7/5; meanwhile, my teaching effectiveness score for graduate-level courses increased from 4.46/5 for my first teaching assistant position to a 5/5 in my latest semester as an graduate-level course instructor. Further, I have been nominated for the 2021 Pitt A&S School Elizabeth Baranger Teaching Award. I am honored that my students enjoy their classroom experiences and value the skills and knowledge they acquire in my courses.

My teaching practices emphasize experiential learning and a task-based approach. I seek to help students include new information in their existing frameworks by providing them with opportunities to employ economic thinking and engage with hands-on tools. For example, in my course "Economic Development of China," students are required to share a piece of news about China's economy that they read about in journals and/or magazines. This activity encourages students to develop enthusiasm for a specific topic related to China's economic development. I then encourage students to develop these topics further by integrating them into their final project essays. In addition to these types of activities, I also teach students practical techniques and skills. In this undergraduate course, students enjoy the hands-on experience of downloading socio-economic data and using user-generated software on Github to create interactive maps. In my graduate course, students are instructed to implement parallel computing with minor coding modifications. Across all courses, students reported that they found these advanced learning techniques "exciting" and "highly engaging." These task-based activities also help students consolidate their knowledge and equip them with useful tools that they may use to address real-world problems.

As an instructor, I ultimately try to promote a student-centered learning environment. Given the mathematically demanding nature of most economic courses, cultivating students' interest is essential to promoting their continuous enrollment in these courses. Therefore, I am devoted to striking a balance between delivering intriguing lectures and maintaining technical rigor. In my course *Economic Development of China*, for example, I was eager for my U.S. students to explain China-specific terminology. In a case in which we discussed the "Hukou" system in China and the implicit value of earning a local "Hukou" from the black market in one of China's major cities, I used an example of illegal immigrants to the U.S. who attempt to acquire an American green card through marriage fraud to help students understand the concept more clearly. On another occasion, we discussed a famous but technical paper to explain China's economic growth, *Growing Like*

China, and I substantially simplified the theoretical mechanisms in the model and illustrated the key components using block diagrams and bullet points. Because of my earnest attempts to make this information more accessible to them, students shared that they could more clearly understand the "stories" behind the paper.

Philosophically, I view teaching as a dynamic process wherein knowledge is acquired through interactions between teachers and students. My role as an instructor is to facilitate each student in building a body of knowledge based on their unique backgrounds and inspire them to find a distinctive context for the information they receive. Consequently, my approach to teaching is dedicated to creating those "Aha" moments when students realize that they can readily connect new concepts and knowledge with familiar concepts or that they can apply course concepts to real-life situations. I believe this is crucial in helping students overcome feelings of inadequacy and frustration that they can often encounter during the early stages of steep learning curves. Simultaneously, I express my respect and genuine interest in students' questions, actively encouraging them to ask even seemingly unconventional or "unreasonable" questions. Recognizing that students—especially those without a strong economic background—may become stuck on seemingly trivial matters, I continually remind my students that no questions are ever "too stupid to ask."

While ready to accommodate the department's need, I envision offering courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, including China's economy and core courses in micro- and macro-economics. As reflected in my research and teaching experience, I am well equipped to teach principles of economics, applied econometrics, environmental economics, energy economics, industrial organization, quantitative research methods and various economics electives (e.g. urban, labor, public, development), and economic geography. I also look forward to incorporating big data mining, machine learning, and GIS data processing and visualization into these courses. On the graduate level, I can also offer research methodology courses such as computation methods for economics, structural models, and quantitative methods.