7 Teaching Philosophy

It is difficult to outline one's teaching philosophy. However, I will attempt to do so by saying that I believe in treating students as adults. I can teach them, but I can't do the learning for them. Beyond that, I make every effort to inform the students of exactly what is required of them and to grade their efforts in the most objective way possible. I am eager to answer questions outside of class, but I also expect the students to work hard. I have learned by experience that students tend to live up to expectations, so I expect a lot of them.

In addition, I place a high value on teaching labs. I feel that hands-on experience in the lab is important in teaching physical science. If nothing else, it teaches students that physics is more than just a bunch of equations. Those equations really are related to the world around us. Labs also offer the opportunity for direct interaction between teacher and student. I find this very useful and rewarding.

Diversity Diversity of the student body is of great importance. The value goes beyond just giving an educational opportunity to an individual which otherwise might not get the chance to shine. Students gain from meeting others from very different life experiences, who, none the less, share a passion for physics. Physics always has been an international science. Bringing in as many people from different backgrounds as we can, broadens everyone's perspective. Not only do the students benefit from meeting many different people, but physics itself is improved. Non-traditional students often feel, "I don't belong here" when they arrive at a university. We need to recognize the students feelings and let them know, "Yes, you do belong here." I find that getting to know the students well enough that they can share their feelings, is very helpful for my ability to mentor and encourage all students. I may be a little more sensitive than some, since I was a first generation college student. I must admit to feeling a little lost in the beginning. Finally, never assume anything about a student. Talk to them, then advise.