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# STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

## PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Providing a foundation of knowledge from which an individual can better understand the world around them, I believe that formal education delivered through traditional classroom settings provides only a *portion* of what's needed for an individual to best learn and grow.

I believe that an integrated approach to learning, where experiences are used to drive inquiry and deeper thought, helps to develop an individual's understanding of their work in both theory and practice. When an individual makes personal connections between the theory, context, and application of what they are learning they exhibit greater comprehension and complete more meaningful work in the process.

My growth, as an individual and community development practitioner, has been *informed* by the formal education I have pursued, *placed in context* with the hands-on learning I have experienced, and *developed* through ongoing personal and professional development. The collective sum of these educational opportunities has helped me to develop into a more well-rounded practitioner.

## EXPERIENCE AS AN ADULT EDUCATOR

Helping students, in post-secondary and community environments, navigate their personal learning journeys has provided me with satisfaction and reward that I've been unable to find in any other role.

At the college level, I integrated community-focused principles into the design and delivery of Urban Planning curriculum. Highlighting opportunities to create positive change through professional practice, the studies I led connected students with civic employees and community leaders to enhance their learning while improving their local communities.

In the community, I lead development sessions focused on engaging, educating, and empowering individuals to take greater ownership of their professional and volunteer roles. Teaching adult learners design and coding, as well as marketing and communications skills, they are able to enhance the community and not-for-profit work they complete as a result.

## LONG-TERM CAREER GOALS

I am interested in the investment of my time and energy in the following three areas:

1. I would like to return to teaching in the post-secondary environment. Better connecting students to their communities through collaborations and partnerships with local organizations, I am interested in how experiences that bridge learning environments can be more meaningfully designed.
2. Building upon an established role as a community leader, I am working towards developing an intentional and long-term program with my local community league focused on the development of everyday citizens through activities that engage, educate, and empower.
3. More generally, I am interested in continuing to develop my skills and understanding as an active community member so that I may better serve the communities that have provided me with so much.

## AREA OF INTEREST

In more recent years I have focused my inquiry around key questions developed through ongoing activities in my personal and professional work:

- Are we effective in engaging, educating, and empowering citizens in ways that enable them to take greater ownership of the places they call home?
- How valuable are intentional, small, and *exclusionary* communities of practice in sustaining meaningful, purpose driven, and impactful action in broader communities?
- Can we design better learning experiences and knowledge transfer opportunities to develop incoming cohorts of practitioners, while at the same time deepening, broadening, and strengthening the skills of established practitioners?
- As a community, how can we more effectively address topics and issues that are relevant and meaningful to our local contexts while examining broader education and knowledge that are valuable to both practitioners and our local communities?

## REFERENCE LIST

- **Here Comes Everybody** by Clay Shirky  
Focused on communities formed through new media channels, I found *Here Comes Everybody* valuable for its comments on communities of practice, the relationship between community size and organizational impact, social capital, and how the changing behaviours of society are shaping both ecosystems and tools.
- **Eyes on the Street: The Life of Jane Jacobs** by Robert Kanigel  
Building upon an annual read of Jane Jacob's seminal work *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, I enjoyed the illustration *Eyes on the Street* provided of how an everyday citizen can empower themselves to make meaningful change in their community. This book offers a compelling look into the journey of concurrently shaping personal learning and local communities to benefit all, while bringing attention to some of the necessary challenges at the same time.
- **Stanford Social Innovation Review - [www.ssir.org](http://www.ssir.org)**  
As a 'clearing house' for more recent thoughts and resources on everything social innovation related, I access the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* on a regular basis to gain a broader perspective on topics such as economic development, education, collaboration, and civic engagement.
- **Leadership: For Active Creative Engaged Communities** by Brenda Herchmer  
As a companion resource for the programming offered through *Campus for Communities of the Future*, this book is one I read on an annual basis and share with fellow practitioners, both new and established. Offering a more practical 'how-to' approach to community development, this resource works through a series of core competencies that leaders in the field can benefit from when developing stronger more resilient communities.
- **Better Together: Restoring the American Community** by Robert D. Putnam  
I appreciated the optimism conveyed in this book related to the developing and bridging of communities across America. It was a refreshing look into positive actions underway after the somewhat depressing, albeit needed, picture presented in Putnam's previous work, *Bowling Alone*.