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Personal Statement

In my fifteenth year of teaching in higher education, I continue to be driven by a deep commitment to inclusive, experiential learning and to preparing students for dynamic careers shaped by creativity, technology, and human-centered values.

My interdisciplinary work across Graphic Information Technology (GIT), User Experience (UX), and immersive media is rooted in the belief that design can be a powerful force for equity, empowerment, and innovation. As we shift toward Industry 5.0, which prioritizes human-machine collaboration and community-driven problem solving, I am re-imagining the academic experience to better support what learners need to thrive—both professionally and personally.

I design and deliver learning environments that emphasize real-world challenges, community engagement, and experiential learning. From the GIT Creative Agency course to cross-media design studios, students engage with authentic projects and diverse teams. These learning spaces not only develop technical skills, but build confidence, agency, and voice. I prioritize accessibility and flexibility, offering inclusive structures such as Zoom to class (as needed) and recorded sessions. One student remarked:

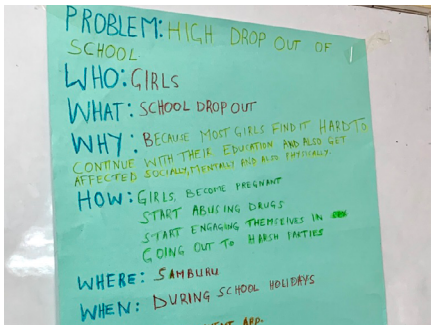
> *"I am so thankful for the sessions being recorded and also being offered via Zoom. This class is already so accessible and I appreciate when professors make learning environments more inclusive." — Athena Yuhnke, Spring 2023*

I view global collaboration as central to the future of education. I've had the honor of participating in two U.S. Department of State-sponsored Mandela Washington Fellowship Reciprocal Exchanges, each reinforcing how design can serve as a platform for social change.

In 2019, I traveled to Maralal, Samburu, Kenya to teach design thinking to young students at the Moi School for Girls alongside Mandela Washington Fellow Janet Silantoi. Our students courageously tackled problems in their own communities—including government corruption, female genital mutilation, and jiggers (parasitic infections)—using design frameworks to ideate and advocate for change.

STUDENTS AT MOI SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, CARRASQUILLA & SILANTOI

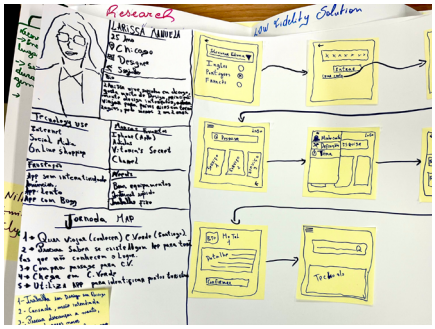
STUDENTS USE DESIGN THINKING TO PREVENT JIGGERS INFECTIONS



STUDENT GROUP PRESENTATION PREVENTING DROP OUTS

In 2023, I partnered with entrepreneur Joelson Leal in Praia, Cabo Verde to deliver a design thinking workshop at the Universidade de Cabo Verde. We met with the university's Rector, computer science faculty, and U.S. Embassy staff. Students received certificates presented by the U.S. Ambassador, and we were honored to meet with Secretary of State Pedro Lopes to tour the Cabo Verde Tech Park, an ambitious initiative uniting entrepreneurs, educators, and business leaders from around the world.

UNI-CV STUDENTS SOLVING A DESIGN CHALLENGE



PROTOTYPE FROM A UNI-CV STUDENT GROUP

CHRISTINA CARRASQUILLA, PEDRO LOPES, JOELSON LEAL

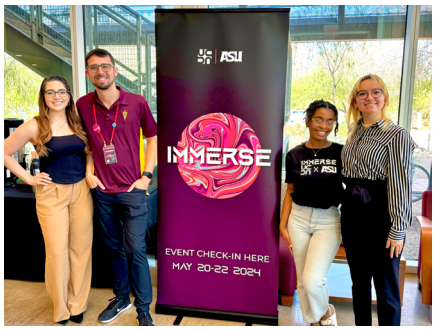
These experiences reinforced my belief that design education must connect with global communities and real challenges—and that students, no matter their geography, have the capacity to create meaningful impact when given the tools and support to do so.

In alignment with these global experiences, I was selected to participate in the ASU Leadership Academy, which is honing my leadership skills and providing a structured space to make meaningful institutional change. My current project, "Redefining Higher Education Through an Inclusive Polytechnique-Inspired Model," aims to re-imagine traditional university structures by integrating a Polytechnique-style framework that fuses interdisciplinary excellence, public service, and experiential learning. The goal is to cultivate future-ready graduates who lead with innovation, ethical responsibility, and civic-minded purpose. This work builds upon my commitment to inclusive and community-engaged education and aligns directly with ASU's mission as a New American University.

Curriculum development is a core part of my impact. I have created and co-designed more than a dozen new degrees, concentrations, and courses, including recent contributions to the BS and MS in Visual & Interactive Media (proposed program name change from GIT), UXP 430: Digital Accessibility (for new CISA UX degree), and GIT 350: Cross-Media Design (designed to elevate the design foundations of our many transfer students). As Graduate Program Chair for GIT, I've led inclusive redesigns of culminating experience guidelines and helped align our graduate pathways with industry standards. My work ensures that our students are equipped with the interdisciplinary, ethical, and technical skills needed in design and technology sectors increasingly influenced by AI, automation, and immersive media.

In 2024, I served as Chair of the UCDA Design Educators Summit: Immerse, an international conference. It was a privilege to host design educators from across the country and showcase ASU's Polytechnic campus, the MIX Center, and the GIT program. What made the experience especially rewarding was the collaboration with our GIT students: those enrolled in the GIT Creative Agency course developed the full conference brand system, including print, digital, and interaction design. This project exemplified the potential of experiential education: students learned by doing, designing for an international audience, and contributing to the professional discourse of our field.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER, ANA HERRUZO, IN ASU POLY'S PICACHO HALL



PROFESSOR BREAUX & STUDENTS FROM THE CREATIVE AGENCY

UCDA DESIGN EDUCATORS SUMMIT ATTENDEES

As a first generation college graduate and only second generation high school graduate, my success has been greatly influenced by mentorship. That is why my mentorship extends across programs and education levels, from Barrett Honors students to graduate portfolios to high school outreach. I've advised over 200 culminating experience projects, guided students through design research, writing, and presenting, and celebrated their growth as practitioners, leaders, and changemakers. Whether curating student exhibitions, running student clubs like AIGA Poly, or coaching faculty in inclusive teaching (in a Community of Practice sponsored by Fulton Schools of Engineering's Learning and Teaching Hub), I strive to center people and process over perfection. As one student reflected:

> *"After the first [AIGA] meeting, my fears went away… My confidence grew and this last semester I was able to host a meeting. Thanks so much for your encouragement which helped me to develop my social skills." — Ashley Samulak, Spring 2022*

Looking ahead, I remain focused on three goals:

> 1. *Scaling experiential learning by expanding client-based, transdisciplinary, and international collaborations that prepare students for complex, real-world work.*
> 2. *Integrating ethical AI and immersive technologies into design curricula to shape thoughtful, agile designers.*
> 3. *Transforming academic culture through mentorship, community building, and inclusive practices that center student voice and equity.*

Design is a tool for connection, and education is the space where we activate it. In all of my work—teaching, service, curriculum, and scholarship—I aim to build environments where learners can become confident, critical, and compassionate contributors to our shared future.

2017 AIGA POLY AWARD FOR SOCIAL EMBEDDEDNESS FROM FSE

2018 MANDELLA WASHINGTON FELLOWS SOCIAL

2025 UDCA MINDFUL CONFERENCE IN CHARLOTTE, NC