



## Teaching Philosophy of Patrice Perry-Rivers, Ph.D.

As a professor of strategic management and entrepreneurship, my teaching philosophy is deeply rooted in the belief that education should transcend the mere transmission of knowledge and actively inspire action and societal impact. Business schools have historically produced some of the world's most influential leaders, and it is my goal to contribute to this legacy by cultivating socially responsible and ethically driven business professionals who will make a difference in the world.

My academic journey, which includes a B.A. in Government from the University of Virginia, an MBA from Regent University and culminates in a Ph.D. in Management from Rutgers Business School, has equipped me with a robust foundation in organization theory, strategic management, entrepreneurship, and the role of government in spurring economic opportunity and development. My educational background, combined with my diverse professional experiences which include corporate marketing and advertising strategy development and product management, management or founding of non-profits/social enterprises to help those less fortunate, and formerly operating my own successful commercial enterprise, informs my approach to teaching. I aim to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring that my students are well-prepared to address real-world challenges with innovative and ethical solutions.

Central to my teaching philosophy is the emphasis on experiential learning. I believe that students learn best by doing, which is why I incorporate case studies, simulations and project-based assignments with real firms into my courses. These methodologies enable students to engage deeply with the material, apply their learning in practical scenarios, and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In addition, I have created relevant, new courses and degree programs focused on innovation, entrepreneurship, and experiential learning at the institutions I have served, including over a dozen new undergraduate and graduate courses, an entrepreneurship minor, a required service learning capstone course, and an innovation and entrepreneurship-focused MBA proposal to fill curricular voids and bridge the gap between practical and theoretical learning.

My commitment to social responsibility and bridging theory with practice is also reflected in my development of research-based, non-credit education/training programs to spur economic development and wealth creation in under-resourced communities. One of the key initiatives I created is the Minority Small Business Launch Center (MSBLC) program in Virginia, which is based on research findings from my dissertation which indicated that education is not positively associated with entrepreneurship in under-resourced minority groups as it is with other groups, and that these groups typically lack the wealth, training, and network resources to enable their successful entrepreneurial launch, performance or industry diversity. The program was implemented from July 2021-December 2023 primarily in the Richmond Metropolitan Statistical Area via a multi-stakeholder partnership including entrepreneurship and economic development-focused state agencies, private organizations, and other regional universities and was supported by a substantial state of Virginia grant. The program provided comprehensive training and resources to buffer the resource deficiency of existing and potential minority entrepreneurs--with notable success as over 300 new minority firms were created and over 1200 entrepreneurs enrolled over a 2-year-period far exceeding the projected goal of creating 40 new firms. By collaborating with regional partners, my program created a robust support system that fosters entrepreneurship and economic growth in minority communities and engaged them with the broader entrepreneurship ecosystem. The success of the MSBLC program is a testament to the transformative power of targeted, research-based educational interventions and community engagement, and the utility of combining both practical and theoretical knowledge for positive societal outcomes.

In addition, I have been actively involved in various regional and national initiatives aimed at supporting minority and underserved entrepreneurs. For instance, I co-developed and implemented the MBE Pandemic Recovery Training Program for the Virginia Minority Business Development Agency Business Center, which provided essential training to minority and under-resourced entrepreneurs, helping them navigate the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, I have participated in statewide efforts to evaluate entrepreneurship and economic development programs for state funding, regional efforts to diversify the entrepreneurship ecosystem in the Richmond market, and national efforts to help garner funding from the Biden-Harris administration to create a new pharmaceutical sector in Virginia led by American small businesses. These efforts have allowed me to contribute my academic and real-world business experiences to support historically underserved minority and rural entrepreneurs, further solidifying my commitment to social responsibility.

My research is also reflective of my social responsibility-centered philosophy which has driven my teaching and academic programming initiatives. My work, published in journals such as *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* and the *Journal of Ethics & Entrepreneurship*, explores how resource position and institutional status impacts entrepreneurial strategy and small firm outcomes; analyzes and compares the resources, experiences, and outcomes for minority and non-minority entrepreneurs, rural and non-rural, and otherwise "higher" strata and "lower" strata entrepreneurs; and analyzes the impact that institutionalized societal stratification has on the issue emphases, strategies, and social performance outcomes of social enterprises. This research not only helps fill a void in academic discourse but also informs my teaching, ensuring that my students are exposed to my research insights that help them understand the broader societal implications of business practices.

As an educator, I strive to cultivate an environment that encourages ethical reflection and social awareness. I challenge my students to consider the broader impact of their business decisions and to embrace a mindset of ethical leadership. By highlighting case studies of successful social enterprises, assigning articles that compel students to examine and develop solutions for the vast wealth and performance differences between higher and lower status entrepreneurs, and discussing the ethical dilemmas faced by business leaders, I aim to instill a sense of moral responsibility in my students.

I also recognize the significance of being a minority woman in business academia. African Americans are one of the most underrepresented minority groups in business schools, and, as a high-performing minority woman, I believe my presence and the efficacy of my research, teaching, and other academic efforts have the potential to inspire a new wave of business leaders who value diversity and inclusivity when these factors are coupled with excellence. My hope is that my work will encourage my students and the field to adopt a broader, more ethnically and gender-inclusive perspective, enabling businesses to disperse greater economic opportunity and wealth throughout society.

In conclusion, my teaching philosophy is anchored in a commitment to societally relevant education and research. Through my development and teaching of relevant entrepreneurship and strategy courses, work on academic research-based initiatives that foster opportunity, and my dedication to fostering ethical business practices, I aim to empower my students to become agents of positive change. By integrating experiential learning, social responsibility, and socially-relevant research into my teaching, I aspire to develop the next generation of business leaders who are not only successful but also socially conscious and ethically driven.