**Dr. Ahna R. Skop**

Teaching and mentoring are the most rewarding aspects of my career. The enjoyment that I receive from a student‘s excitement in my classroom or lab is by far my primary reason I sought a career in academics. *My teaching philosophy is simple.* Teachers should be facilitators of learning, not conveyors of information. I provide students the freedom to discover things on their own, explore new avenues of research and to think critically about their work and that of others. The way I teach science reflects the way I do science.

**Creating an inclusive learning environment:** There are many ways of knowing and means of learning, but creating an inclusive learning environment is key to student success regardless of background or ability. One way I create a positive teaching and learning climate is first getting to know my students and help them understand how I am as well.

**Scientific Art:** The nature of the questions that society is increasingly asking of the science community crosses boundaries that have been rarely crossed. It requires visualizing information in creative, new ways and these visualizations push scientists ever closer to the domain of the artist. This intersection of art and science can be closer than you think. What does thinking like an artist offer the scientist?  What can the blending of art and science do to creatively approach research questions, encourage a more diverse population of students to pursue science, and improve the public’s understanding of science? By allowing a closer relationship between science and art, we see new possibilities while at the same time humanizing the practice of science.

I will speak about my background, how I create inclusive learning environments, and my public outreach that I am involved with using scientific art. My goal is to give to you a glimpse of how sharing your life story, creativity and passions can impact not only the success of students, but the public.