Philosophy Statement of Robert A. Young

I am a steward of the built environment. I understand the forces affecting design decisions and appreciate the overall context of how design can best be integrated to meet our current and future needs. Within this context, the long-term sustainable approach to growth must include a look forward but also careful stewardship of the built and natural environments. As professionals, we need to continually integrate appropriate solutions into this evolutionary process as we seek a sustainable future.

Leadership Philosophy
Overall, my leadership philosophy evolved from my experiences, both positive and negative, in the many initiatives and activities that I have undertaken. By observation, introspection, and experimentation, I have developed a leadership paradigm that is inclusive, collaborative, and proactive. Within the diverse range of professional, public, and academic cultures that I have worked, I have developed the ability to recognize which approaches to take to reach a productive conclusion. In some instances, I use “quiet leadership” to guide without making a strong presence while in others I recognize when decisiveness and strong leadership is needed to move forward.

The core of my approach to leadership stems from these two quotes:

“Be the change you want to see in the world.”
— Mohandas Gandhi

"The voyage of discovery is not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.”
— Marcel Proust

I adopted these quotes as personal touchstones to remind myself that to be a true leader in any arena I must live by what I “profess” and lead by example. Similarly, it is critically important to assist others in seeing things in new ways and how we can use those new insights to enhance the overall environment. This forms the basis for my approach to leadership in my teaching, research, service, and administrative activities.

Scholarship Philosophy
My scholarship is based on the philosophy of “stewardship of the built environment.” As defined in my book, Historic Preservation Technology (Wiley, 2008):

“Stewardship of the built environment balances the needs of contemporary society and their impact on the built environment with its ultimate effects on the natural environment.”

I include the focus on the “built” environment as a means to gain the attention of those affiliated directly with the design, planning, construction, and operation of buildings. In addition to new buildings, older buildings can also be viable in meeting sustainability needs. The common ground between them is the broader aspect of landscapes. The
larger question thus becomes: “How can we adapt our cultural landscapes through the reuse of existing buildings and the thoughtful insertion of new buildings to best enhance sustainability of both the built and natural environments?” Following international models of urban design, I believe that much of the built environment can be successfully reused to increase sustainability. In leading by example, I rehabilitated my 1904 home in Salt Lake City. This project won two preservation awards.

I have set my agenda to further develop the interdisciplinary aspects of architectural education that facilitate stewardship of the built environment. As such, my research addresses several areas that will enhance the architect’s role as facilitator of the collaborative design process. My work within the context of stewardship of the built environment investigates issues affecting three areas:

- revitalization of the built environment and cultural landscapes
- building conservation, remediation, and rehabilitation
- social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

My overall goal to enhance the interdisciplinary understanding of these issues leads to my research and teaching strengthening the students’ and practitioners’ abilities to succeed in the contemporary design and construction environment. To enhance the broader opportunities for collaboration and interdisciplinary outreach, I am developing a more formal leadership role to further engage academy with the profession.

**Educational Philosophy**

Architecture is experiential in both emotional and physical terms and multiple factors affect the success of a building: aesthetics, constructability, cost, comfort, functionality, context, and durability. In my particular field of inquiry, the preservation and adaptive reuse of existing or historic buildings are even more so affected by these factors and are compounded at times by a polarized or indifferent yet mixed constituency of diverse socioeconomic, ethnic, and educational backgrounds.

My philosophy as an educator is to provide a holistic-based education that sensitizes the students to the reality of their professional environment and exposes them to the concerns of people in that professional environment. In accordance with the proverb attributed to Confucius, my andragogy follows this premise:

“I hear and I forget. I see and I understand. I do and I remember.”

My courses focus on preparing the students to apply their critical thinking and reasoning skills to solve problems they will encounter in school and in professional practice. As such, assignments that sensitize the students to the built environment and enable them to experience it first-hand are used to newly see the built environment as a personal learning laboratory or what Marcel Proust describes as “having new eyes.” As a student and educator, I have found four stages that one must pass through to gain professional proficiency: 1) acquisition of language describing processes involved; 2) internalization of the relevant concepts; 3) integration of the language and concepts into solutions; and 4)
interaction with or simulation of the professional environment. Recognizing these stages has helped define the andragogy around which I have structured my teaching.

A successful sustainable environment is based on the ability of the parties involved to communicate, recognize each other’s needs, and collaborate to form the best solutions with the given resources. I have gained considerable expertise from both leading and participating in these collaborative processes. Basic knowledge required for this can be drawn from textbooks and course lectures but to prepare students for "real life" I move the students beyond the classroom. To reinforce concepts, accessing and using local buildings and cultural landscapes as learning vehicles show how buildings, systems, occupants, and contexts interact with one another. To enhance interpersonal skills, group projects are instrumental in shaping the collaborative skills needed in contemporary and future professional practice. For graduate level courses, especially, individual or group projects that emulate professional practice conditions as either a theoretical exercise or as an actual service learning project can provide the experience and confidence necessary to create viable solutions to real problems.

Service Philosophy
My service ethic combines the essence of my leadership, educational, and research philosophies through service work within the university, local, statewide, national, and international environments. I use my service duties to see how others use and understand technical concepts, interpersonal skills, and collaborative processes. As a result, I understand people from diverse backgrounds and disciplines and translate that understanding into more effective leadership as well as enhancing public awareness of the architectural and cultural landscape preservation issues that are confronting society.

Service enables me to move beyond the academic environment and explore opportunities for my own growth as a community leader and as an academic entrepreneur. My professional service and service-learning activities significantly contribute to my educational and research agendas. Most importantly, service is an integral part of my own growth strategy. The boundaries between my teaching, research, and service are often permeable or nonexistent. This is when my greatest opportunities for growth and fulfillment occur. As such, I will continue my service work to bring aspects of non-academic environments into academic settings and vice-versa.

Summation
I use my combination of skills and experiences to understand the many forces affecting the process of getting older buildings rehabilitated, new buildings built, and the importance of the cultural landscapes that they create. As an overarching professional goal, my agenda is to further the development of the interdisciplinary aspects of architectural education. Drawing from my own experiences, I recognize that the truly successful practitioners are those who can effectively interact along the entire spectrum of the building planning, design, and delivery process and can readily understand how their actions affect and are affected by the social, economic, and environmental constraints of our building-related resources and their impact on the cultural landscape.