

*Ruth J. and Howard F. Newton Memorial Graduate Student
Teaching Award in Statistics
2022 Recipient - Gozde Sert*

We are unfortunately losing Jacob Helwig to the Department of Computer Science. As a result, we will re-assign the Ruth J. and Howard F. Newton Memorial Graduate Student Teaching Award to Gozde Sert based on her excellent evaluations by the instructors she was Teaching Assistant for during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years. In the Fall semesters, Gozde TA'd for STAT 601, which is an introductory graduate course for students in other departments, most from the Colleges of Science and Engineering. The students are demanding. In the Spring semesters, she TA'd for STAT 415, a second semester of undergraduate mathematical statistics for mostly Statistics majors. This is a senior-level course, and students usually struggle quite a bit with the material, so it is important that the TA be patient, understanding, and a good communicator.

Gozde's performance as TA was evaluated very highly by her assigned instructors. A few of the comments from the instructors:

- “She is very proactive. And dealing with STAT 601 was hard.”
- “STAT 415 is a challenging course for most of the students who do the course. Unfortunately, many of the students are too embarrassed to acknowledge that they have no idea. During her time as their TA, she developed a rapport with the students in such a way that they started to trust her and allow her to see that they did not understand. She did this by being available to them at all times. Her recitation sessions were 2 to 3 hours long. Prior to every exam (there were 3) she had additional recitations. To help with the HW she would find questions similar to those in the HW (but not a small number change, but a concept that was related) and go through a couple then ask the students to solve them on the blackboard.”
- “She graded all of the HWs, and each HW was very long. What they did not understand she covered in her recitation.”
- “On the occasions she understood things incorrectly (it can happen), she had absolutely no ego in accepting her mistake and trying to figure out where we went wrong. This is rare in a TA, as they feel they should know everything because it is an undergraduate course, but often then don't.”
- “If I asked her to do something, she never tried to get out of it.”
- “Gozde tries very hard. She also has no arrogance and is willing to learn. She was a great TA!”

Honorable mention goes to Connor Brubaker, who received very strong student evaluations after teaching an introductory Statistics service course in Fall 2021, and we still highlight Jacob Helwig's performance as TA. Jacob will receive a plaque.

Alan R. Dabney

Associate Professor & Associate Head for Teaching Excellence
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