
***Ruth J. and Howard F. Newton Memorial Graduate Student
Teaching Award in Statistics
2018 Recipient – Shelby Cummings***

Shelby Cummings is the 2018 recipient of the Ruth J. and Howard F. Newton Memorial Graduate Student Teaching Award in Statistics. Shelby was selected to receive the Newton Teaching Award based on her excellent teaching of several undergraduate statistics courses. The course, STAT 201 is an introductory course in statistics at a very basic level. This course is very challenging to teach due to the fact that the vast majority of the students have an extremely negative attitude towards any quantitative course. Shelby was able to overcome the students' negative attitude towards statistics by emphasizing concepts through examples they could relate to without all the equations that most statistics instructors rely on to define and explain statistical methodology. Shelby also taught STAT 302 a course for majors in the biological sciences, many of whom are hoping to go to medical, dental, or vet school for their advance degree. They are a very demanding group of students but Shelby received superb student rankings in the end of the semester evaluations as demonstrated by the average scores she received on the question, "On the whole, this was a good instructor" were 4.80, 4.86, and 4.72 out of a maximum of 5. A score above 4.00 is considered excellent thus Shelby is regarded by her students as being a truly outstanding instructor. The students also conveyed highly complementary remarks concerning Shelby's teaching.

A few of the comments from her students follow (without editing):

- "Shelby was GREAT. She was always more than willing to help whether it was make an appointment or answer emails within a few hours. She truly wanted her students to do well and that did not go unnoticed. I would take another course with her or recommend her in a heartbeat."
- "Shelby is awesome! She is really nice and always answers questions and wants to make sure we all understand the material completely. She understands that it is a summer course and it is fast paced so she is great at grading and answering questions on material. She is always very clear about what she wants us to focus on and her reviews are great."
- "She is one of the greatest instructors I've had! She is so flexible with her office hours and really tries to help you succeed with such a great positive attitude. She always tried to make the class lectures somewhat entertaining. I just love her spunk and enthusiasm for it all - it definitely helps me learn the material better."
- "I have earned 121 credit hours between 3 different colleges, and Professor Shelby Cummings is the best instructor I have ever had. She really cares that we learn the material. She is caring, polite, and professional. She put an impressive amount of effort into making us notes to better understand the content. She does not just lecture, but she actually teaches the material. Every TAMU professor should be required to attend one of her classes because none of them, from my experience, even come close to matching her level of teaching skills, professionalism, and care"

There were numerous other extremely positive comments concerning Shelby's instruction. I also visited her classroom, unannounced, and found Shelby to be a highly effective lecturer.

Michael T. Longnecker

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