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*Ruth J. and Howard F. Newton Memorial Graduate Student  
Teaching Award in Statistics  
2016 Recipient – Robert Philbin*

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Robert Philbin is the 2016 recipient of the Ruth J. and Howard F. Newton Memorial Graduate Student Teaching Award in Statistics. Robert was selected to receive the Newton Teaching Award based on his 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. Robert was able to overcome his 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. Robert's average scores on the students' end-of-semester evaluations were between 4.15 and 4.35 out of a maximum of 5. The students also conveyed highly complementary remarks concerning Robert's teaching.

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

- "I highly recommend Robert to all students who need to take his course. He engages students in the lecture, and he's quite comical which makes it easier to attend his class considering my class for him is an 8am."
- "Robert is the best math professor I have had in college! Mr. Philbin is really enjoyable and keeps my attention in class."
- "Robert was very helpful and cares about his students success"
- "The instructor provided extensive notes and examples which greatly helped with studying "
- "Professor Philbin was overall a great teacher. I think he did his absolute best in trying to explain the vagueness and uncertainty of statistics. There were times that he would ramble on and confuse things a little more, but I met with him in office hours and he helped me understand concepts better."
- "Great explanations, lots of class participation, always ask if we had questions and if we did, explained what he had previously said in multiple ways."

I also visited his classroom, unannounced, and found Robert to be a highly effective lecturer.

***Michael T. Longnecker***

George P. Mitchell '40 Endowed Chair in Statistics  
Professor & Associate Department Head of Statistics