Dr. Serkan Hoşten

"Dr. Hoşten is pretty much the coolest professor ever and should teach everything."

(Most of this citation, including that sentence, is quoted directly from students' and colleagues' testimonials.) So wrote one student on an evaluation. Here are a few more testimonials from student evaluations.

"… the best math instructor I have ever had…. incredibly challenging, stimulating, caring, hardworking and thoughtful…. notes and assignments are well-crafted and aimed to motivate and push you to make discoveries on your own…. grades homework himself and gives it back promptly…. knows where you are and how you are doing with the material….lectures are clear and organized… had a sense of humor and a skill at explaining the difficult material in a comprehensible way. He is excellent!''

"I also greatly appreciate the time that Dr. Hoşten spends personally reading students' work for accuracy and writing style and organization. In a large class like this, I highly commend Dr. Hoşten for giving students the individual attention that helps them improve their mathematical writing.''

"What makes Hoşten such a great teacher are the notes that he provides. They are written extremely well and in a way that helps you understand things clearly.''

"He goes beyond what is written in the book…. generally seems very invested in his students.''

Serkan Hoşten earned his Ph.D. in Operations Research with minors in Mathematics and Computer Science from Cornell University in 1997. In Fall 2000, he joined the mathematics faculty at San Francisco State University after an assistant professorship at George Mason University, a visiting scholarship at UC Berkeley, and a post-doctoral fellowship at MSRI.

At SFSU, Serkan has taught a wide variety of courses, ranging from undergraduate courses in calculus and modern algebra to graduate courses in representation theory, optimization, and combinatorics. In addition, Serkan has mentored 18 master's thesis students during the last 17 years (one from George Mason University and the rest at SFSU), and he currently has six students who are working on their master's theses and are on track to finish in 2016. Serkan's former students have completed or are completing doctoral programs in mathematics or mathematics education, are working in industry, or are teaching at community colleges and four-year colleges and universities. Serkan has also published over 30 professional papers with various co-authors in a variety of subjects.

Regarding Serkan's teaching style, one of his colleagues reports:

``Sometimes his unorthodox approach in certain courses encountered resistance from students, but almost invariably they thanked him for it after the full experience.'' Combined with the student testimonials, it is clear that Serkan is a superlative teacher who has left, and is leaving, a lasting, positive impact upon his students.

Regarding Serkan's mentoring approach, a former student tells us:

"[Serkan] treated me like a colleague and a collaborator, rather than a student underling. This really allowed me to blossom and gain confidence in my mathematical research abilities and has played a big role in my own personal research success. Without Serkan's tutelage and support at the beginning of my academic career, I don't think I would be where I am now.''

Regarding Serkan's research, we quote two of his colleagues.

"Dr. Hoşten has very broad research interests… formally trained in Operations Research, Algebraic Statistics, and combinatorics… [he] also knows algebraic geometry and has an eye towards understanding Amari's book on Information Geometry. It is very reassuring to me to see him being invited to deliver series of lectures at workshops…. Dr. Hoşten's interest in understanding differential geometry corroborates my belief that the best teachers are avid learners themselves.''

"Serkan Hoşten is a very accomplished scholar, teacher and mentor who easily transcends the traditional (and, in my view, anachronistic) boundaries between `pure' mathematics and `applied' mathematics. He plays a most valuable role in the Discrete Mathematics community in the Bay Area, he is a key player in the remarkable mathematics groups at SFSU, and he has a phenomenal record in mentoring students and guiding them to research…. Serkan and Seth [Sullivant, a former student at SFSU] laid the foundations for what is now known as Algebraic Statistics. This is an emerging field at the interface of mathematical statistics and computational algebraic geometry, and Serkan was a key figure in its early development…. On the interdisciplinary side, Serkan has made excellent contributions to computational biology."

Beyond the classroom, Serkan is co-founder and co-organizer of the weekly **Algebra, Geometry and Combinatorics (AGC) Seminar at SFSU**; since 2000, he has been a founding organizer of the semi-annual **Bay Area Discrete Mathematics Day (BAD Math Day)**; in 2005, he co-organized an **NSF-CBMS Regional Research Conference**; from 2009 to 2014, he served as a faculty mentor to practically all of the 50 graduate students involved in the NSF GK--12 program $(CM)^2$ at SFSU; and he is currently organizing the MAA-sponsored **Mathematics Research Communities Workshop on Algebraic Statistics for June, 2016.**

We are proud to present this year's Section Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics to Serkan Hoşten, an extraordinarily effective and inspiring teacher.

FEBRUARY 27 2016