# Laurel Joy Gabard-Durnam

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**2018 – 2019**  **Statistics for Neuroscientists summer seminar**
Role: Co-instructor
Enrollment: 20 students; Division of Developmental Medicine, Boston Children's Hospital
Course aimed at upper-level psychology students beginning their thesis research projects
- Developed course scope, structure, and material with fellow co-instructors
- Taught classes on principles of regression, moderation, and mediation analyses

**2017 – 2018**  **Advanced Topics in Electrophysiology Analysis Seminar**
Role: Lead Instructor
Enrollment: 15 students; Division of Developmental Medicine, Boston Children's Hospital
Course aimed at graduate students and postdoctoral fellows
- Developed course scope and structure
- Taught majority of classes, with invited lectures from experts in specific advanced topics

**2015**  **Developmental Psychology**
Role: Teaching Assistant (Professor Nim Tottenham)
Enrollment: 108 students; Columbia University
Undergraduate introductory course on developmental psychology

**2014 – 2015**  **Processing fMRI data workshop series**
Role: Co-instructor
Enrollment: 20 students; Columbia University
Peer-run course aimed at junior graduate students beginning fMRI research projects
- Developed course scope, structure, and material with fellow co-instructors
- Taught classes on fMRI pre-processing, task and resting-state connectivity approaches

**2014**  **The Developing Brain**
Role: Teaching Assistant (Professor Frances Champagne)
Enrollment: 39 students; Columbia University
Undergraduate upper-level course for psychology and neuroscience majors

**2014**  **Advanced Psychological Statistics: Linear Regression\***
*\*Nominated for award in teaching excellence at UCLA*
Role: Teaching Assistant and Lab Section Leader (Professor Jennifer Krull)
Enrollment: 36 students; University of California, Los Angeles
Graduate upper-level statistics course for first-year psychology graduate students
- Designed and led weekly sections and labs with toy datasets to illustrate statistical principles

**2013**  **Brain and Behavior Development**
Role: Teaching Assistant (Professor Adriana Galvan)
Enrollment: 231 students; University of California, Los Angeles
Undergraduate upper-level course for psychology and neuroscience majors

**2012 – 2013**  **UCLA Psychology Statistics Peer Mentor**
- Tutored two graduate students during statistics courses and provided practice problem sets

# INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

2017  **Mentoring Undergraduates Intensive Workshop**
Harvard University
- Daylong workshop on strategies for working with undergraduate mentees

2016  **Center for Teaching and Learning Workshop: How to teach science writing**
Columbia University
- Half-day workshop on how to support student writing skills, and generate and edit writing assignments in science courses

2013  **Teaching Apprentice Practicum Course**
University of California, Los Angeles
- Full quarter-long course on effective teaching strategies in psychology, included video analysis and feedback on several of my lectures by a senior instructor

# STUDENT EVALUATION EXCERPTS

## Overall impressions across courses:

"[Laurel's] zest and passion for mentorship, for science, the way she cares…it is seriously special and rare. I can say with complete confidence that she is one of those unique people that is meant to teach, to care for her students, to cultivate the kind of connection with people that brings them into her work and motivates them to stay driven and to go after what they want."

"…She was very patient without doing the work for us…Laurel was there to help empower us. She gave me greater faith in my statistics abilities, and that's one of the best things that has happened to me in grad school."

"She deserves an award for her stellar teaching skills."

"Laurel's gift is in finding examples that resonate with her students and make the material crystal clear."

"Laurel shows a level of empathy and compassion for students and subject matter that is rare. She took responsibility for our learning and made an effort beyond all expectations. She is an adept teacher, finding ways not just to make course material more interesting, but to make it easier to learn and expand upon."

"She was VERY concerned with student learning…used great examples to explain concepts and was concerned with us learning the concepts through different and unique techniques….will make [a] great professor!"

"…Not enough good things can be said about [Laurel]…She is also very concerned and cares about our class doing well…she is ALWAYS ready to help. She seems like a wonderful person as well."

## Undergraduate Introductory Course (Developmental Psychology):

**Engages students with the material:**
"Laurel has been a really huge source of help throughout this class. Laurel is inspiring in her enthusiasm and extremely engaging. She is so knowledge[able] and positive. I went to her office hours and emailed her several times this semester, and came out each time with a much better understanding of course material and a general feeling of positivity!"

"…She was amazingly responsive. Her real-world application examples also helped my bring theory into practice. I get excited about whatever Laurel has to say."

"Laurel has gone above and beyond to help me throughout the semester… She is clearly passionate about the material and makes it tangible for the students…I would love to have her as an instructor in the future!"

**Communicates effectively to increase understanding:**
"I met with Laurel during office hours a few times. She was very helpful and explained things that I didn't understand in new and easy to understand ways."

"She uses really creative and relatable analogies to help us grasp the course material in a way that's both funny and informative…I felt like Laurel was the best at explaining concepts clearly and really articulating."

"She was very effective in communicating/clarifying the points."

"Laurel has an intuitive understanding of knowing where students have lapses in their understanding. She is very clear…Laurel explains herself very well..."

**Available to support learning:**
"Laurel was extremely helpful…at presenting the material in an accessible and concise…she made extra time besides her office hours to accommodate questions about both the course, and a career in developmental psych. Very knowledgeable on the subject and presented information with enthusiasm and prowess."

"Laurel was super approachable. She has very good teaching skills. Also, she provided extra office hours to help students."

"Laurel went out of her way to accommodate me into her office hours as I had work."

**Shows respect and concern for student learning:**
"She clearly cared about us learning the material and frequently offered to meet with us outside her obligations as a TA."

"Laurel helped me when I was falling behind on assignments. Awesome leader."

"Having background knowledge on the process of learning is a great strength that Laurel possesses. She encouraged me to come to her office hours for further explanation on concepts and provided examples on the level of my understanding…she provided strategies for improving…she always showed a willingness to help me…I'm so grateful to her for showing so much care and time given to my understanding of the material."

**<u>Undergraduate Upper-Level Courses (The Developing Brain; Brain and Behavior Development):</u>**

**Engages students with material:**
"She knows her material and is passionate about it, she has such great energy and enthusiasm to help us out that it is contagious and makes us want to ask her questions! Keep that energy up because it motivates us!"

"Super enthusiastic and really took the time to explain the complicated concepts…"

"…[Laurel] Always tried to make learning the material as easy as possible by integrating the material with more relevant, real-life examples…very clear and explained the material very well."

"She has the best analogies. Makes studying really easy. Love the class. Love laurel."

"She knows how to make the information very memorable and make it interesting. She was very knowledgeable and I felt very comfortable going to her for help."

**Communicates effectively to increase understanding:**
"Very helpful and willing to assist throughout the semester. Laurel successfully broke down large chunks of information so that it was easier to understand and her fluency with the topics made following the material when she was explaining…much easier. Thank you!"

"I LOVE LAUREL!! She is understanding…gave me better study skills for the next exams."

"She made connections to real life situations that also helped us to learn and understand the material."

"…Laurel also has excellent and effective communication skills, and can explain things really well. She is also super nice and approachable, making studying for this class a breeze."

"She will be a great professor and researcher. She was able to break down concepts, give applicable examples, and relate the material for us. Thanks Laurel!"

**Available to support learning:**
"She always seemed eager to offer help when we needed it. Her review sessions were…probably the best review sessions I've ever attended at UCLA…she obviously cares about the students."

"Laurel is really easy to talk to and was helpful when I did have questions."

"Laurel has been nothing but the best TA I have had at Columbia. As an athlete I often had conflict with office hours or review sessions and she has always helped me by meeting me [at] more convenient times or by email. She always tries to get back to you as soon as she can. She always really tries to answer your question so you will understand it and if not she is willing to repeat it until you finally do."

"Really cares about the students and gives excellent review presentations. She is highly organized and very prompt in responding to emails."

**Shows respect and concern for student learning:**
"I loved her effort in helping us learn… She was extremely approachable…and made all of the material easier by explaining it."

"She is genuinely concerned about student learning"

"Laurel is excellent at presenting and teaching the materials…she also cares about and strive[s] to help students grasp the concepts of the course."

"[Laurel] really seemed to care about student learning and was always very knowledgeable."

"She clearly knows her stuff and has a fresh, quirky way of presenting the concepts so that students can grasp them more easily and firmly. She really tries to make the info accessible."

"[Laurel] always gave examples that made it easier for students to understand the subject matter. Always made students feel welcome outside of class."

**Graduate Upper-Level Course (Advanced Statistics: Regression):**

**Engages students with material:**
"She is very bright and her ability to communicate complex ideas in comprehensible language was impressive."

"I am impressed at her use of visual aids and the way she has increased our enthusiasm for the course material. She goes above and beyond to facilitate student learning."

"Best TA ever. Because of Laurel, this course was both interesting and truly informative. She is exceptionally intelligent and really went above and beyond for her students."

**Communicates effectively to increase understanding:**
"Her creativity in presentation material and dynamic teaching style allowed students from all different statistic backgrounds to grasp difficult topics."

"She is incredibly effective in communicating complex information and very approachable. It's clear she has a passion for teaching…"

"Laurel is the best, most amazing TA I have ever had, and every student in this class is in unanimous agreement about that… her ability to make things make sense is outstanding and unrivaled."

"She can take concepts that we're not understanding and explain them in three different ways that all make sense, and use cute and easy to follow examples to drive the important points home."

**Available to support learning:**
"She went above and beyond, spending more time with students than she could ever have been expected to."

"Every time I had a question via e-mail she didn't just respond, she responded with a thorough explanation of the concept and always an offer for more information."

"She is approachable, so if I didn't get a concept I felt totally comfortable coming up to her after class, going to office hours, or emailing…"

**Shows respect and concern for student learning:**
"She was also extremely respectful of us as students...Laurel is a natural teacher, and extremely likable!"

"She cares which makes us care."

"She is really in tune with the class and can tell when people are confused, and doesn't move on until she has tried explaining a concept in several ways…"

"She is creative, clever, and sensitive to the student's needs. She is the exemplar."

"I never hesitated in asking questions and was never made feel dumb when I did."

"Her dedication to helping students succeed was very apparent. I appreciated the extent to which she went above and beyond to make sure I left feeling more confident in the answers to my questions as well as the process of breaking down a challenging concept into something manageable…I took away helpful teaching strategies I hope to incorporate in the future."

"She's really smart, and she's a really good teacher, and every student in this class absolutely loves her. Nobody wants to miss a Laurel section or a Laurel lab because everyone knows they'll benefit immensely if they go…"