

Citation to Accompany the Awarding of the
2024 Distinguished Teaching Award
To
Lara Pudwell

The Indiana Section Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics recognizes the accomplishments and contributions of Section members who have been identified as extraordinary teachers in the mathematical sciences and whose teaching effectiveness has been shown to have had influence beyond their own institutions.

This year's recipient has a distinguished 15-year record of teaching, scholarship, and service. She has worked tirelessly to develop into an outstanding teacher whose instruction is creative and engaging. Students and colleagues admire her for her enthusiasm, approachable presentation, and engaging presence in the classroom and beyond.

Growth mindset and positive affirmations are central to her pedagogical approach. Her current teaching load includes two sections of a course taught under an NSF-IUSE grant on "Transforming Foundational Mathematics with Interdisciplinary Co-Requisite Courses." In this course sequence, Calculus I is taught at a slower pace, spread over two semesters with embedded algebra and trigonometry review. As part of teaching this course, she has converted her grading methods to using mastery based/standards-based grading, which evidence suggests is particularly helpful for underprepared students. One student stated of her, "The most effective aspect of her teaching is the way she presented the information. She never made the information seem difficult, and always motivated all of us to do our best. The positive affirmations before all the exams honestly brightens my entire week. It shows us how much she cares about our growth."

The recipient has successfully mentored numerous undergraduate research projects in mathematics. These projects have enabled students to deepen their mathematical understanding, spark their intellectual curiosity, and sharpen their critical thinking and communication skills. Many of the undergraduate research projects have led to published articles in prestigious peer-reviewed journals. These undergraduate research projects have taken place with students from her university over the academic year, as well as with students from throughout the country over the summer as part of an NSF-funded Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU), for which she served as the Co-PI for 10 years. The recipient has elevated undergraduate research through co-authoring a book, "A Mathematician's Practical Guide to Mentoring Undergraduate Research."

Outside of academia, she enjoys reading and traveling. She has been to all 50 states and 9 out of 10 Canadian provinces. She has also visited 15 countries throughout the world. She plays the guitar, ukulele, and banjo.

This year's Indiana Section of the Mathematical Association of America Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics goes to Lara Pudwell of Valparaiso University.

Angie Walls, Distinguished Teaching Award Selection Committee Chair
Livia Hummel, Section Chair
Indiana Section of the MAA
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