**Matthew Groh**

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March 17, 2022

Dear Dean Blanche Staton,

I would like to nominate David Ramsay for the Goodwin Medal to recognize David's "conspicuously effective over and above ordinary excellence" in teaching. I know David as both a colleague and a co-instructor. In January 2022, David led the development and taught the majority of the lectures for MAS.S73 *Moving Beyond the Replication Crisis*. I helped David co-design this course, and I taught one lecture. I have seen David present his research, and I have also attended classes that David TA'ed for Joseph Paradiso's MAS.S76 *Adventures in Sensing*.

David's work ethic for teaching is stronger than any other graduate student that I have ever seen. David combines a deep expertise in HCI, electronics engineering, and psychology, a broad knowledge about the world, and thoughtful pedagogy for developing well scoped syllabi and prepared lecture materials to teach students and help them navigate complex, interdisciplinary subjects in a stunningly effective manner. In preparation for MAS.S73 *Moving Beyond the Replication Crisis,* David invited me to join him in co-designing a course to help students understand how the current replication crisis in psychology (and elsewhere) came to be, what makes it a complicated and complex problem, and how to begin addressing problems of replicability and generalizability. I helped with a small portion of the work, and I offered to lecture on one particular component of the crisis. David impressed me and designed the entire rest of the course. David invited another guest lecturer, Noah, who is a graduate student who had never lectured before, to give a lecture, and David graciously and brilliantly helped Noah prepare his lecture. I was amazed that David could help a fellow graduate student learn to lecture, David could deeply engage students with his own lectures, and David would constantly make time for students to connect with him in office hours or over email.

Beyond the classroom, David developed a [website for the class](#) and hosted all lectures on the website to share the lectures with anyone who is interested in learning about this topic. Moreover, David serves as a live-in mentor and role model as an MIT GRA. David does not just go home – David lives and breathes teaching. When I first heard of this award, I immediately thought of David because he truly goes beyond excellence and it is so obvious. I remember attending a lecture on Zoom a year ago in which David served as the TA for the *Adventures in Sensing* class, and I remember how David introduced the speakers with such excitement, kindness, and exquisite details, and I thought it was one of the most heartfelt and informative introductions that I had ever seen.

I very, very highly recommend David Ramsay for the Goodwin Medal.

Best Regards,
Matthew Groh

3/09/22

Blanche Staton
Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Eduation
77 Massachusetts Ave
Cambridge, MA 02139


Dear Dean Staton,

I'm writing this letter as a 21 semester veteran of MIT classes, through three degrees and 68 classes (I counted). I had an amazing experience this past IAP. I ended my MIT journey in the last class I ever took, which ended up among one of the best-taught classes I've ever taken. David Ramsay's MAS.S73 had no business being a particularly well-taught class; it was a first-time class taught by a first-time lecturer (and graduate student, no less) on a niche subject over IAP. However, it was clear from the first second that this class would be different. David's ability to weave a story that is compelling and educational drew me in to the complex and nuanced field of clinical psychology and made it accessible and comprehensible. It was obvious how passionate David is about the field, and his passion was contagious. His use of real-world examples from pop culture and academia alike allowed me to quickly understand the magnitude of the replication crisis and feel empowered to critique statistical missteps not only in clinical psychology but also my own research field. Between the detailed lecture designs, carefully written class blog and well chosen guest lecturers, it was clear to me that David had put more effort into this class than any other professor or lecturer I have seen. And it showed.

While David is a fantastic lecturer, where he really shines is in facilitating group discussions. David has a way of boldly asserting lead-off questions which spark conversation and controversy, leading to discussions where we all walk away having learned something. I think everyone in the class noticed his patience with timid first-year undergraduates, emboldening them to contribute their experiences for us all to learn from. His ability to take anecdotes from students in wildly disparate fields and relate them to the class' topic at hand made the material uniquely engaging and relatable and inspired me to yearn for more knowledge about the field. This easily outpaces what I have seen from most full professors at MIT.

At the end of a class I overheard an undergraduate student ask if there were other clinical psychology classes at MIT, and as a Ph.D. in a completely different field I caught myself wondering the same thing. I can't think of a more deserving recipient for the Goodwin Medal.

Sincerely,


Nathan Monroe, Ph.D.
*MIT Ph.D., EECS, '22*
*MIT M. Eng., EECS, '17*
*MIT S.B., EECS, '13*

03/15/2022

*The course David led, on the replication crisis and it's conceptual and practical underpinnings was both really important and interesting. David's lectures in particular were able to break down a huge and complex (and highly contentious!) problem into actionable technical principles and, at the same time, deeper questions about science and research. I can't remember having taken a course so ambitious in scope but also approachable and clear, working from first principles to the state-of-the-art. I suspect I will carry the perspective I gained from the course into my future research in a variety of ways.*

-Nikhil Singh

Phd Candidate, Opera of the Future, MIT Media Lab

**Associate Dean Blanche Staton**
OGE, 77 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Associate Dean Blanche Staton,

My name is Aaliya Hussain, and I am an undergraduate student at MIT. Over the past IAP, I completed the MAS.S73 course for credit. I found MAS.S73 to be a highly intellectually stimulating experience that has significantly influenced the way in which I view academic research and examine scientific evidence.

MAS.S73 focused on the recent-publicized replication crisis within psychology research. Unlike that of several other courses that I have taken at MIT, the content of MAS.S73 was not constrained to a single academic discipline. Rather, the lectures drew upon fields ranging from meta-statistics to scientific philosophy and demonstrated the nuances and wide-ranging implications of the replication crisis. As someone who particularly enjoys learning via an interdisciplinary lens, I found the variety and breadth of the course content rewarding and refreshing.

MAS.S73 strongly influenced my understanding of scientific research. Not only did I learn crucial lessons about avoiding and detecting "questionable research practices" in academic papers, but I came to critically examine my own fundamental assumptions about the scientific process. I had previously accepted constructs such as falsifiability and causation to be intrinsic parts of science, but over the course of MAS.S73, I learned about the limitations of the constructs as well as the importance of understanding those limitations when conducting and interpreting research. I will carry forward these lessons about the nature of science both when I conduct my own research and when I consider others' research.

Though MAS.S73 was listed as a graduate course, I, as a first-year undergraduate, found it accessible and valuable. Many of the ideas covered in lectures were abstract and complex, but the instructors presented the ideas in a manner that was clear and logical. Our major homework assignment, which involved applying p-curve meta-statistical analysis to a research area of our own choosing, gave me firsthand experience with the real-world challenges in performing rigorous meta-analyses and detecting publication bias. The instructors always encouraged us to ask questions and start discussions, and I often stayed after class to continue my conversations with my peers and instructors–in fact, the conversations were among the top highlights of the past IAP period for me.

Because I thoroughly enjoyed the multidisciplinary content of MAS.S73, learned invaluable lessons from the course, and had a fantastic experience with my instructors and classmates, I would like to nominate David Ramsay, the lead instructor of MAS.S73, for the Goodwin Award for Graduate Teaching.

Warm regards,

**Aaliya Hussain**

MIT UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT, CLASS OF '25

**Rob Lewis**

PhD Student
Affective Computing Group
MIT Media Lab

roblewis@media.mit.edu

March 22nd, 2022

Dear Dean Blanche Staton,

I am writing to you to strongly commend David Ramsay for the Goodwin Medal for Graduate Teaching.

I was a student in David's 2022 IAP class – *MAS.S73: Moving Beyond The Replication Crisis: How to Spot Misleading Social Science and Design Better Experiments*. I cannot emphasise enough how insightful, well-organised, and enjoyable this class was!

The "replication crisis" in the social sciences is a very significant challenge for new generations of scientists. Exposing it has led us to consider fundamental questions about the philosophy of science and knowledge, and to examine more closely how we can improve our experimental methods to verify fact from fiction. It is exactly the type of topic that we – as the MIT community – should be deeply concerned by and actively working to address. Thus, I'm so grateful to David for taking the initiative to design a course on this and I hope it will inspire future scheduling.

The syllabus and course materials that David prepared guided us through this complex topic very effectively. It is quite remarkable that he was able to condense such a broad and nuanced subject into 4 very concise and engaging lectures and a couple of homeworks. I came away feeling well-informed about the topic and inspired to do more about it. David is also a very capable lecturer and teacher – he clearly understands the subject deeply and is talented at translating his knowledge to students with different levels of familiarity. David's ability to stimulate academic intrigue was further evidenced by the group discussions he hosted after the lecture. Students were so interested and engaged they often stayed late debating the topics and brainstorming the steps required to ameliorate the crisis.

To conclude, given his initiative and clear talents as a teacher, I strongly support David in his nomination for this award.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Lewis

3/09/22

Blanche Staton
Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Eduation
77 Massachusetts Ave
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Dean Staton,

I highly recommend David Bradford Ramsay for the Goodwin Medal for Graduate Student Teaching award. I am grateful to David for accepting me as a listener in the class he created, "MAS.S73 moving Beyond the Replication Crisis: How to Spot Misleading Social Science and Design Better Experiments." An extremely relevant topic for anyone doing experimental interventions and writing papers. Just what I needed. I am studying for my Ph.D. in mechanical engineering at the graduate School of Engineering at UNAM, Mexico. I joined the 10-hour MAS.S73 class online since I live in Mexico.

David designed his classes to be interesting, up-to-date, relevant, practical, showed relevant examples and cases, easy to grasp complex concepts, interactive, and eye-opening. I learned not only to spot misleading social science but, even more, I learned how to design and share outcomes in a meaningful way. David was knowledgeable on the subject matter. The setup and the visual materials were professional. The class felt short even when the lecture was one hour and a half plus 30 minutes for attendees' questions and comments. I felt like I was at MIT since my comments were heard and considered. For example, providing the atendees in the classroom also with a microphone thus the online participants could hear their questions and comments. In the first class, David would keep us informed of the others' interventions. The second class had microphones for the Q&A. The class has a website with the lectures, the syllabus, homework, and resources.

David is generous with his savviness, warm making us feel that we belong, professional at delivering his classes, and passionate about the replication crisis.

Sincerely,

Carla Gómez Monroy

Carla Gómez Monroy
*PhD Candidate, Graduate School of Engineering, UNAM, México*
*MIT MAS alumn, Class of 2004*
*carlagm@media.mit.edu*