



University of
Lethbridge

NEWS RELEASE

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First Graduate Mentorship Award posthumously granted to exceptional mentor and leader, Dr. Gülden Özcan

A tireless and unwavering leader dedicated to scholarly activism, Dr. Gülden Özcan was an erstwhile supporter of graduate learners, encouraging her students to take ownership of their graduate experience through disciplined exploration of their topics and to believe in their ideas.

Özcan, who passed away in May 2022, is the first to be honoured with the University of Lethbridge School of Graduate Studies Graduate Mentorship Award. She will be recognized as part of the 2023 Fall Convocation ceremony on Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023, 10 a.m. in the 1st Choice Savings Centre gymnasium.

“In my exchanges with Dr. Özcan’s students, it became clear that she embodied all the qualities the Graduate Mentorship Award is meant to recognize: guiding students through all the steps of their graduate journey, from a student’s first inquiries onward, encouraging intellectual exploration, and genuine caring about student welfare,” says Dr. Marc Roussel, associate dean of the School of Graduate Studies.



Dr. Gülden Özcan

Students with the good fortune of having had Dr. Gülden Özcan as an instructor learned very quickly how devoted she was to ensuring their academic success. An unwavering leader who inspired and motivated learners to be creative thinkers and global citizens, Özcan was especially impactful as a mentor to graduate students.

Originally from Turkey, Özcan completed a BA at Baskent University in Ankara and an MA and PhD at Carleton University. She joined the University of Lethbridge in 2018 as an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology. During her short time as a faculty member, Özcan distinguished herself through her work, including involvement in radical

theatre, with the Scholars at Risk program and in critical police studies. She also worked at challenging and disrupting systemic and social injustice issues on campus and was the first ever recipient of the SNAC+ (Support Network for Academics of Colour Plus) Excellence in Equity Award.

Her greatest strength was engaging the minds of her students, and should any express an interest in graduate studies, she was quick to take an interest in nurturing that desire. Özcan was known for acting as supervisor to students before they had even gained admittance to the graduate program, so committed was she to supporting their interests. Whether she eventually agreed to supervise a student or help find them a supervisor more aligned with their specific interests, she was a supportive presence in the important initial stages of their graduate school journey.

As a mentor and supervisor, she encouraged her students to take ownership of their graduate education. Graduate students, she believed, should not only think about what they want to get from their programs but should be heard when they express their vision for their graduate education. Accordingly, Özcan taught students to advocate for themselves and to believe in their ideas.

Özcan's dedication to her craft, and especially her students, was no more apparent than when she became ill. Her first concern was for her students' ongoing supervision, and beyond helping students find new supervisors, she continued to be a positive, committed and supportive presence in their programs as long as she was able.

About the Graduate Mentorship Award

This award recognizes faculty members who demonstrate excellence in graduate-level mentorship and who foster intellectual, professional and personal development of graduate students at the University of Lethbridge. Outstanding mentors inspire and motivate students under their supervision to be creative thinkers, to push their research, scholarly, and creative activities in new directions, and to make a positive impact on the community and the future as global citizens.

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/first-graduate-mentorship-award-posthumously-granted-exceptional-mentor-and-leader-dr-g%C3%BClden>

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Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.