

Utrecht, April 25, 2025



Utrecht University

Dear Colleagues,

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the unexpected passing of our dear colleague, Umut Gürsoy. We are deeply shocked by this loss as he was not only a valued colleague and mentor, but also a friend.

Umut Gürsoy began his academic journey with a double major in Physics in Istanbul and dedicated his postgraduate education to theoretical physics. He pursued graduate studies at the Weizmann Institute and obtained his PhD at MIT under the supervision of Daniel Freedman. Between 2005 and 2012, he held postdoctoral positions in Paris, Utrecht, and at CERN, before joining the Institute for Theoretical Physics at Utrecht University as a junior faculty member in November 2012.

Umut's research focused on holographic dualities and strongly coupled quantum field theories. He built bridges between theory and experiment with significant contributions to the theoretical understanding of the quark-gluon plasma in quantum chromodynamics. His work continues to influence experimental efforts, including those at the ALICE experiment at CERN. He built a vibrant research group, supervising many PhD students and postdoctoral researchers, many of whom have gone on to successful academic careers.

Known as a passionate and inspiring educator, Umut taught courses on quantum field theory, string theory, and electrodynamics. He supervised numerous thesis students and was honored as Teacher of the Year in 2014. He also served as Program Leader of the Theoretical Master's Program at Utrecht.

Umut was widely respected in the international physics community, maintaining a broad network of collaborators and securing numerous research grants. He was also a member of the Science Academy in Turkey. In March 2025, he was promoted to Full Professor at Utrecht University.

Beyond his academic accomplishments, Umut lived a very active life, both for his family, colleagues and friends. Among his colleagues around the world he had many close friendships. He would always stand up for what he believed was important, both in physics and beyond. He will be remembered for his warmth, kindness, and unshakable enthusiasm.

Our heartfelt condolences go out to his family, friends, students, and colleagues around the world.

He will be profoundly missed.

On behalf of the colleagues from the Department of Physics of Utrecht University.