

2005

Statistics and Actuarial Science Awards

The Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science is pleased to honor its students, staff, and faculty every year during our Annual Awards Reception. A full copy of all of the award winners is available on our web site at

<http://www.stat.sfu.ca/programs/awards.html>

The Department has 7 major awards:

- The Watson Wyatt Scholarship for students with high standing in Actuarial Science established by the Watson Wyatt Company.
- The Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship for students with high standing in Actuarial Science established by Pacific Blue Cross.
- The Statistical Society of Canada (SSC) award
- The Statistics and Actuarial Science Endowment Awards (four awards) funded by earnings on our departmental endowment fund.

Watson Wyatt Scholarship

Ruowei Zhou

This scholarship is awarded annually to a student in an approved Actuarial Science program who has completed ACMA320. It is granted on the basis of academic performance.

Ruowei Zhou writes:

My first degree and PhD degree are in computer science. After graduation, I spent several years doing image processing and pattern recognition related R&D works in Singapore. In 2003, when my family immigrated to Canada, I found that it was the time for me to replan my future and rethink my career. After some researches, Actuarial Science seemed a good choice for me. It involves a lot of mathematics and statistics. It also plays an important role in people's everyday life: insurance, pension, finance, and other areas.

In fall 2003, I was accepted into Actuarial Major by SFU. The study proves to be very challenging and fascinating. In fall 2004, I got a co-op job in D.A. Townley, a Vancouver based pension administration company. During the eight-month co-op work term, I have been given great opportunities to do various projects in pension field: investment performance analysis, pension plan actuarial valuation, pension plan amendments and consolidation, and pension calculations. This experience further convinced me that I've chosen the right career path for myself.

I am expecting to graduate in the fall of 2005. After that, I will enter the Statistics and Actuarial Science graduate program of SFU. My goal is to be an expert in Actuarial field. I am confident that I will excel in my studies and future works.

Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship

John Kowalik

One Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship in Actuarial Science will be made available in any semester, based on academic merit, to a 3rd or 4th year student with a declared major in Actuarial Science.

John Kowalik writes:

I came to Canada 12 years ago with my family in search of a better future, so I have always placed school as my first priority. Receiving a scholarship like the Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship is an incredibly rewarding and motivating experience for me.

I first heard about actuarial science from my grade 12 math teacher. I have always had a passion for mathematics so I immediately looked into it and became very interested in the field. I began my studies at Simon Fraser University in 2002 with a slight feeling of intimidation and fear. I knew that the actuarial science program is very competitive and I was afraid that I could drop from being one of the top students in my grad class to a relatively average student at SFU. However, the increasing difficulty of classes only heightened my interest in the material and caused my grades to consistently improve. I am currently at the top of the actuarial science program in SFU with an upper division GPA of 4.30. It will certainly be difficult to bring this up any further.

Last Fall semester I worked as a TA for the Statistics and Actuarial Science Department and I previously volunteered as a Calculus TA for the Mathematics Department. Aside from my studies, I also enjoy playing and recording music with my band, and competing in expert/pro bike trials competitions. I believe that such a well-rounded lifestyle of diverse activities is what allows me to maintain a great attitude.

This scholarship is the first major symbol of achievement to me, as well as a great financial support. It has made me realize that my hard work is paying off, and that I am nearing the transition from school to work and perhaps graduate studies.

Thank you very much for your support!

Statistical Society of Canada

(Kyle) Kuan-Chiun Wu

The Statistical Society of Canada Award will be presented to an undergraduate student who is a declared major/honors in Statistics and/or Actuarial Science. The criteria for selection for the award are academic merit and a commitment to the mission of the SSC. The SSC is a national organization representing statisticians from across Canada. Its mission is to encourage the development and use of statistics and probability.

To achieve this, the Statistical Society of Canada:

- helps to develop a public awareness of the value of statistical thinking and the importance of statistics and statisticians in Canadian society;
- works to ensure that decisions affecting Canadian society are based on appropriate data and valid statistical interpretation;
- promotes the highest possible standards for statistical education and practice in Canada;
- promotes the development of statistical methodology;
- promotes a sense of community among all statisticians in Canada;
- provides a forum for the exchange of ideas between theoreticians and practitioners of statistics.

This award was generously endowed by the Statistical Society of Canada using proceeds of the net revenue from the SSC Annual Meeting held at Simon Fraser University in 2001.

The Statistical Society of Canada Award will be presented to an undergraduate student who is a declared major/honors in Statistics and/or Actuarial Science. The criteria for selection for the award are academic merit and a commitment to the mission of the SSC.

Kyle Wu writes:

When I was three years old, my family moved from Taiwan to South Africa, where I spent most of my life. Honestly, the move didn't seem to impact my life much – I was much too busy eating, sleeping, playing, learning to speak properly, and not worrying about picking a good career path to notice the changes. However, when I moved to Vancouver four-and-a-half years ago, I did a very good job (overly good, some would say) of noticing all the changes to my life. These changes ranged from the fact that I'd be going to a completely different school, to the fact that my immediate family would

become spread over three continents, to the fact that cars drive on the right side (or the wrong side, depending on how you look at it) of the road. Fortunately, I didn't have to change my goal to become an actuary.

I first heard about actuarial science from a cousin of mine (one that I particularly look up to) when I was 14. Even before I decided to do any research on the profession, I knew that my current career path would be the one that I'd be taking once I'd gotten high school out of the way, and here I am. As an actuary, not only would I satisfy my desire to have a slightly less-than-conventional job, but, having always been fascinated by mathematics, I'd be able to do it the love *and* for the money.

As with many students at my stage of the actuarial program, I hope to finish my preliminary actuarial exams before I graduate. This shouldn't be too hard to accomplish because, although I am close to graduation in terms of credit-hours, I began an eight-month co-op work term at Pacific Blue Cross in January, which means that I won't be able to finish my course requirements for graduation until the end of the year, at least.

I haven't really made any plans past graduation yet. I suppose I'll try to find work in the actuarial field and try to earn a full actuarial designation as soon as possible, but there are still decisions to be made about whether or not I'll stay in Vancouver, what "flavour" of actuary I'd like to become, and so on.

=====

Statistics and Actuarial Science Endowment Awards

These awards are presented to students in the major/honor program with high academic standing.

Feng Li

Three years ago, when I arrived at Vancouver International Airport as a new immigrant from China, I was considering a new career instead of software engineer for which I have been working for nearly 10 years. I thought I should choose a career that must be exciting, challenging, and the most important thing is such that I can take advantage of all my knowledge and skills I got from my past education and career.

I'm very good at mathematic, have professional computer skills, and extremely curious about finance and investment subject. I searched school and program on the Internet and then found Actuarial Science Program at SFU was just exactly what I was looking for. However, ACMA program is a very hot program at SFU. Fortunately, I was accepted into the program as a second-degree student after two semesters hard studying at SFU.

During the first semester after I was admitted into the program, I was so fascinated by what I was studying in ACMA320 and ACMA315. It was the first time in my life I did realize that the price for an insurance contract was calculated by some scientific and strict assumption. So I can't wait to study other ACMA courses.

Since I arrived Canada, I'm very proud of two accomplishments I have achieved till today. One is I got my first baby, my little son Alex; the other is the program I'm studying. Whenever I talked about my program, I always attracted some envious eyes from other students. So I know I just did a right choice. I will continue to work hard toward completing the program and then look for a job as an actuary or further my study in actuarial or statistics field.

Yew-Wei Lim

I was originally a computing science major but made the switch to Statistics when I realize that is what I am passionate about. I did complete the Certificate in Computing Studies before making the switch, and this credential will complement very well with a Statistics degree and a certificate in actuarial science.

While working as a computer programmer fulltime, I started enrolling in SFU computing science courses in the evening. Through the years, I have tried philosophy, computing science, mathematics, statistics and actuarial mathematics courses – and I can say that Statistics is what I enjoy doing most, and actuarial science comes as a close second. It is a major decision for me to quit my fulltime job to be a fulltime student. I am hoping that will speed up my mid-career change from computing to the field of statistics.

My transition to Statistics is not exactly smooth. My father in Singapore fell seriously ill late last year and I had to make frequent trips to Singapore to visit and handle studies at the same time. My father passed away in March this year, and it felt as if the world has collapsed. I was surprised at how caring the SFU community is when instructors wrote to console me and to send their sympathy. It was then when I realize I am very fortunate to be a part of SFU.

Ten years ago, when I took my first actuarial science course at SFU, I was very keen on being an actuary and even wrote to the Canadian Institute of Actuaries for advice. I was disheartened then by the length of time it takes to attain fellowship with SOA. Although I have a promising career in computer science, my aspirations is in the field of Statistics and Actuarial Science. It takes me ten years to realize that and I don't wish to wait another ten years to regret not giving my best to pursue my ambition.

I should graduate in another 5 semesters. My dream is to pursue a Masters degree in Statistics after this and then teach. I think I will make a good Statistics or mathematics instructor. I hope to make learning Statistics fun and interesting.

Xiao Lu Wang

More than three years ago, I came to Vancouver from Dalian, a small, but very beautiful city located on the northeast coast of China. My high school courses in China were focused on mathematics, physics, and chemistry. My favorite subject of the three is mathematics. Right before graduation, I was thinking over my career path. I heard about actuarial science from a friend of my parents. After some research about it, I decided to come to Canada to pursue my university study, instead of going to University in China.

I started in SFU in January 2002. At that time, actuarial science is still a very small program in our school, and most students are still wondering what is actuarial science. But as we all see now, three years later, the program has grown dramatically in both size and quality. At the same time, more and more people are getting to realize what an actuary is.

During my three year study in SFU, most of the courses I took were actuarial mathematics, statistics and finance. By the study, not only did I master the professional knowledge, but I also got to learn the way the whole financial market behaves. I enjoy my university study, especially finding out the financial world in depth using the tool of mathematics. I have finished SOA exam 1 to 4, and currently I am preparing for Course 6 in May, 2005.

I did my first co-op term at Pacific Blue Cross. Currently, I am doing my next eight month co-op term at Mercer Human Resource Consulting, Toronto. I feel the co-op working experience is very valuable for students before they start their career. From various experience in firms with different style, I have a better understanding of myself. I got to know what I need to improve now as a new graduate, and an international student working in a consulting firm, with English as the second language. Now I have a clear picture of how it is like to work as an actuary, and I found my interest in it. Also, I mastered the basic skills to work as an actuary. I expect to go back to school for my last academic semester in fall this year, and then start my professional job.

I was 19 years old when I came to Canada with all the dreams, and now I am 22 years old. I feel myself very fortunate to find out what I want to become by my university study. Of course, I will face a lot of difficulties in my future work. However, I believe that as long as I have a strong heart to face and overcome them, my dream will finally realize.

Department of Statistics & Actuarial Science Awards Reception
4:00 p.m., May 24, 2005, K9509

Undergraduate Awards

Undergraduate Open Scholarships

Andrew Balo 1044
Ou Dang 1044
Yanna Hu 1047
Chan-Sheng Hung 1044,1047
Aaron Kinakin 1044,1047
John Kowalik 1044,1047,1051
Victoria Laan 1047,1051
Rong Li 1044,1047,1051
Monica Lu 1047, 1051
Natalia Lysenko 1044,1047,1051
Yui Pui Mak 1044,1047,1051
Eunjoo Park 1044,1047,1051
(Rina) Meng Wang 1044,1047,1051
Xiaolu Wang 1044
Clement Wu 1047
(Kyle) Kuan-Chiun Wu 1044,1047,1051
Shih-Wa Ying 1044
Zhe Zhang 1044,1047

SFU Alumni Scholarship

Feng Li 1047,1051
Rong Li 1047
Yew-Wei Lim 1044, 1051
Xiaolu Wang 1044

Faculty of Science Alumni Scholarship

Rong Li 1044

Dean of Science Award

(Kyle) Kuan-Chiun Wu 1047

**Statistics & Actuarial Science Endowment
Award for excellent achievement in the
Majors & Honors program:**

Feng Li
Yew-Wei Lim
Xiaolu Wang

SSC Endowment Award

(Kyle) Kuan-Chiun Wu

R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship

Yanna Hu 1047
Rong Li 1051

Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship:

John Kowalik

Watson Wyatt Scholarship:

Ruowei Zhou

John Culver Woody Scholarship:

Natalia Lysenko

Graduate Awards

CGS-M NSERC Scholarship:

Natalia Lysenko
Ruowei Zhou

CGS-D NSERC Scholarship:

Simon Bonner

SFU Special Graduate Entrance Scholarship:

Ruowei Zhou

**C.D. Nelson Memorial Graduate Scholarship
2005-2006:**

Natalia Lysenko

GEOIDE Gold Student Scholarship:

Farouk Nathoo

Faculty/Staff Awards

2004 CRM-SSC Prize in Statistics:

Randy Sitter

Pierre Robillard Award for best Ph.D. thesis:

Rachel Mackay Altman

**Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research
Award:**

Jinko Graham