2010
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 6 major awards:

- The April Allen Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship for students with high standing in Actuarial Science established by T.A. Townley & Associates to honor the spirit of April Allen.
- 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.
- R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship in Actuarial Science.
- The Statistical Society of Canada (SSC) award.
- The Statistics and Actuarial Science Endowment Awards (three awards) funded by earnings on our departmental endowment fund.

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April Allen Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship

Chong Wang

This scholarship is awarded annually to students within their first year of being admitted into one of the Actuarial Sciences programs who demonstrate excellence in academic performance and exhibit potential for success in the actuarial science field. Preference is given to students who have personally been affected by cancer and/or have demonstrated leadership and/or service to an organization involved in cancer research and care. It was established by D.A. Townley & Associates to honor the spirit of April Allen.

Chong Wang writes:

My name is Chong Wang. I am very glad to be admitted into the Actuarial Science program, and now endeavour to be an excellent actuary. I started my new academic career at SFU last semester after transferring from China, this was my first time studying an ACMA course. Although being new to this academic environment, I really find that I fall in love with this challenging subject and finally I've achieved a good grade in the course of ACMA 210. I am willing to devote my passion to it and try to understand everything clearly. In addition to my strong interest in the subject, something happened that spurred me to make an extra effort.

At the beginning of last term, my loving uncle passed away from cancer, he is my second relative that suffered this disease. A couple of years ago, my grandfather died of liver cancer. During their treatment, I felt the effect of cancer on the patient. The proliferation of cancer cell worsens the body, and the chemotherapy hardly saves the patient compared with the speed of labefaction. Furthermore, the expense of the treatment becomes a burden to the whole family, who in turn really need a life insurance policy to provide help.

Because of my experience, I became interested in activities for people battling cancer. In 2008, I was honoured to be selected as a volunteer for the World Economic Forum. One of my major responsibilities was to assist Jet Li, one of the most famous Chinese actors and the founder of One Foundation, to raise funds and spread awareness about the foundation. The aim of One Foundation is to help people who suffer from cancer and orphans with AIDS. During that period, I found it meaningful to raise funds from the public and help these people trapped into difficulty and in emergency. This is also the purpose of insurance and pension.

Now, I am an Actuarial Science student and can start pursuing my dream. I hope that I can become an excellent actuary in the future, and contribute to this important science.

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Watson Wyatt Scholarship

Phillip Jang

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.

Phillip Jang writes:

I am currently in my fourth year at Simon Fraser University in both the Actuarial Science Honors and Statistics Honors programs. I have so far completed four of the preliminary exams from the Society of Actuaries (P, FM, MLC, and MFE) and plan to take Exam C this May. I am also currently working as a teaching assistant in the Simon Fraser Statistics Workshop.

I came across the actuarial career late in high school when my counselor introduced me to the field. Thinking the career was a good fit for my skills, I decided to go to Simon Fraser University, and the deeper I went into the Actuarial Science program, the more I was intrigued to become an actuary. I would like to thank the people of Towers Watson for their generous sponsorship of my education. I am able to better progress with my education without worrying about my current financial situation.

The year 2009 was a very busy year which began with a COOP placement at Westcoast Actuaries Inc., which is a consulting company specializing in Individual Pension Plans, a type of defined benefit plan. It was very interesting to see the applications and implementations of what

I studied and to get a glimpse at the role of the actuary. Seeing pension plans live, rather than through a book has made me better appreciate what I have learned in my studies.

The fall semester I had to manage my time well between six upper division courses and two SOA exams. I simultaneously passed Exam MLC and Exam MFE in November with scores of 9 and 10 respectively. I have also taken several advanced math courses in the past year to push the limits of my intellect, and participated in the Putnam Mathematics Competition (A 12-question 6-hour undergraduate math exam with a usual median score of 0 or 1 out of 120) in December. I managed to solve one question on the exam, scoring 10 points.

I would like to thank my friends, my family, and the people of Simon Fraser University for all of their support, and my professors for sharing their knowledge and fascinating experiences. It is an honor to be considered for the Watson Wyatt Scholarship, and I give my fullest gratitude to my sponsors at Towers Watson. I look forward to all the challenges that lie ahead, and I am ready to continue giving it my all. Bring it on!

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Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship

Ying Yuan

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.

Ying Yuan writes:

I first heard about Actuarial Science from a friend majoring in Statistics. She described Actuarial Science as the most challenging major in SFU which trigged my curiosity. So I took ACMA 210, the introductory course for Actuarial Science, and enjoyed the course. To be honest, actuarial science isn't easy for me. I have to study harder than ever, but the sense of accomplishment is worth the hard work.

I have passed CAS exams 1, 2, and 3. After 4 months of co-op at the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, I was very interested to work in the property and casualty insurance field. Currently, I'm back at ICBC working full time as a junior actuarial analyst.

Looking ahead, I'm determined to pursue a career as a property and casualty actuary. I'm glad I chose actuarial science as my major. It was one of the best decisions I have made in my life.

I'd like to thank all my professors, for they have shared their knowledge and experience. I'd also like to thank all my friends and classmates, for they have helped me through some of most difficult courses I've had in SFU. I'll keep up the hard work.

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R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship

Kuan Chiao Wang (Joe) – Yifan Xu (Mike)

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.

Kuan Chiao Wang (Joe) writes:

It is an honor for me to be the recipient of the R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship for the 2010 spring term. When I first heard about actuarial science from a friend majoring in Statistics, he described the program as one of the most challenging majors in SFU. It trigged my curiosity. Hence I took ACMA 210, the introductory course for actuarial science. It was a terrific experience as I met many new friends with brilliant minds. However, to be honest, students in actuarial science are constantly challenged with problems with twists. I must understand the concepts thoroughly, because getting away from partial understanding of some concepts would not be an option in this field of study. One of my favorite quotes from Dr. Parker summarizes it well, "The exam preparation starts AFTER you understand everything."

Currently I'm working in the Household Survey Methodology Division at Statistics Canada in my COOP term. I use my background in statistics and knowledge of Excel and SAS to study a proposed project, US Air Exit Survey. I plan to work in the insurance industry and pursue a career as a property and casualty actuary after my graduation this year. I look forward to applying my knowledge and skills to the real world. Thank you for the support and recognition given to me.

Yifan Xu (Mike) writes:

My mother is a successful private high school math teacher and at the time when I became the champion of China High School Mathematical Olympiad, everyone thought mathematics to be the genetic strength of my family. However, Actuarial Science is never easy for me.

After the midterm exam of ACMA 320, one of the most challenging courses, I became panicked. So I spent a lot of time searching for an appropriate way of studying actuarial science during the summer break. I realized that most undergraduate actuarial courses are applications of combining Calculus and Probability. Now, I always look for the connection between those fields and use my strong math skills and statistical background when writing exams for upper level ACMA courses. This turned out well for me.

Fortunately, my hard work has paid off. I have passed SOA exams P, FM, MLC and C. Currently I am preparing for exam MFE and will take it this coming May.

I plan to graduate in the winter this year. Upon the completion of my degree, I look forward to working for an insurance company, focusing on P&C insurance. I am confident I will be a great actuary.

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Statistical Society of Canada

Huijing Wang

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.

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Statistics and Actuarial Science Endowment Awards

Yejun (Raymond) Song – Roger Yang

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

Roger Yang writes:

I am currently in my fourth year in the Actuarial Science major program here at Simon Fraser University with a minor in Business Administration. I have thoroughly enjoyed my experience here in the Statistics and Actuarial Science department and have learned a lot from both my actuarial science courses and through interaction with peers and professors.

I first came across the Actuarial profession during my last year in high school as I was looking for a career for myself. I had always enjoyed math but did not know which career would best utilize this affinity. I also wanted to find a career that was not just one dimensional but would involve a variety of disciplines. I eventually discovered that being an actuary involves aspects of finance, business, statistics, computer science with a strong emphasis on math. This immediately got my attention and I started to seriously think about a career as an actuary. I started to probe into the actuarial profession and this led to Simon Fraser University as I heard about its rigorous and challenging actuarial science program through a friend. The actuarial majors program at SFU has definitely been challenging and rewarding.

Through the help of the co-operative education program at Simon Fraser University, I was able to apply the concepts and ideas I had learned in class into the workplace in the form of two co-op terms at Manulife Financial in Toronto. My first work term was in the NAIC valuation division of Manulife and my second work term was in the product risk management division. Both have enhanced my knowledge of the practical applications of actuarial science as well as reinforced my desire to purse an actuarial career. Towards that end, I have also passed the first three SOA preliminary exams and plan to write another one this coming May.

Department of Statistics & Actuarial Science Awards
2010

Undergraduate Awards

Undergraduate Open Scholarships:
Yuanxun (Bill) Bao 1094, 1097, 1101
Xuheng Chen 1094
Gabriel Goh 1094, 1101
Phillip Jang 1094, 1097, 1101
Emmanuel Krebs 1094
Jiayang Li 1094, 1101
Ruobing Li 1094, 1101
Ping_Teng Lin 1101
Yunbo Lu 1097
Tim Luo 1097, 1101
Yejun (Raymond) Song 1097, 1101
Xiaomeng Wang 1097
Yifan Xu 1094, 1094
Roger Yang 1094
Ying Yuan 1101
Yuchen Zhang 1094, 1097, 1101
Wei Zhao 1094, 1097

Alumni Scholarship & Bursary Endowment Fund:
Yuanxun (Bill) Bao 1097, 1101
Huijing Wang 1097
Xiaomeng Wang 1094

International Mobility Award:
Amy McConnell 1097

Recreation Leadership Award:
Tim Luo 1097, 1101

Recreation Promotion Award:
Tim Luo 1101

Beverley Raymond Scholarship in Biological Science or Environmental Studies:
Amy McConnell 1097

April Allen Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship:
Chong Wang

R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship:
Kuan Chiao Wang
Yifan Xu

Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship:
Ying Yuan

SSC Endowment Award:
Huijing Wang

Statistics & Actuarial Science Endowment Award:
Yejun (Raymond) Song
Roger Yang

Watson Wyatt Scholarship in Actuarial Science:
Phillip Jang

Graduate Awards

Targeted Special Graduate Entrance Scholarship:
Alisha Albert-Green
Annick Nembot Simo
Joslin Goh

President's PH.D. Research Stipend:
Ryan Lekivetz

Special Graduate Entrance Scholarship:
Joslin Goh

Randy Sitter Annual Graduate Scholarship in Statistics & Actuarial Science:
Ryan Lekivetz

NSERC PGS D Scholarship:
Jean Shin

NSERC CGS M Scholarship:
Stephanie Gabriel

MSc Graduate Fellowship:
Jingyu Chen
Li Chen
Jillian Falkenberg
Qipin He
Lingzhi Jiang
Xiaofeng Qian

PhD Graduate Fellowship:
Cindy Feng
Joslin Goh
Eric Sayre
Lihui Zhao

BC Health Research Foundation Studentship:
Laurie Ainsworth

Faculty Awards

SSC Award for the Impact of Applied and Collaborative Work:
Rick Routledge

Elected Fellow of American Association for the Advancement of Science:
Charmaine Dean