

2012

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 funded by earnings on our departmental endowment fund.

April Allen Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship

Brendan Engle - Diana Sirotic

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.

Towers Watson Scholarship

(Raymond) Yejun Song

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.

Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship

(Sunny) Xiaoting Wang

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.

R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship

(Eric) Yunbo Lu – Tommy Yip

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.

Statistical Society of Canada

Jeffrey Ting

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.

Jeffrey Ting writes:

I wanted to first and foremost, thank the Statistical Society of Canada for selecting me as the 2011-2012 recipient of their award.

Four years ago, upon graduating from the University of Toronto, I returned to Vancouver where I ended up on the coaching staff of the eventual 2009 BC Boys High School Basketball Champion, St. George's Saints' Varsity Basketball Team. As the head coach, Brian Lee, was an old friend, I agreed to join his staff for the season to conduct statistical analysis for his team. Over the course of the season, it became increasingly apparent just how much I enjoyed working with raw data and turning it into actionable information for the rest of the coaches. Not long after the season ended, I found myself admitted to SFU to pursue my second degree, this time, in Statistics.

Now, three years later, I graduate from Simon Fraser University and set to begin the next chapter of my life as a Master's student in Statistics at Purdue University. With this in mind, I treat this award as recognition of all those around me who helped me get to where I am.

Over the last three years, the Statistics department at SFU has naturally made a significant impact as each professor I have had has prepared me for what lies ahead. As the SSC Award seeks to, among other things, promote high standards of statistical education and practice, my ability to satisfy this requirement is thanks to the wonderful people in the department. In particular, I wanted to thank Robin Insley for his help as the undergraduate advisor as well as, most recently, the supervisor of the Statistics Workshop where I had the opportunity to be a Teaching Assistant during my last semester.

Of course, my education would not be complete without the fellow students that I spent many hours studying with. In particular, I wanted to recognize Best Guo and Simon Mak, both Actuarial Science majors, for their collaboration (but mostly, patience) with me over the past several years. I am confident that they both have bright futures ahead of them in their fields. Without a doubt, my academic merit to justify receiving this award would not exist without their help.

I would also like to thank the Athletics Department at SFU for employing me as the statistician for the majority of NCAA teams located on campus which allowed me to maintain a connection to sports statistics during my time at SFU. Lastly, the biggest thanks again, goes to Brian Lee for his unwavering support and encouragement over the years to pursue my dream and for his acting skills in pretending to understand what I was talking about when I tried to explain statistical methods to him.

Statistics and Actuarial Science Endowment Awards

**(Jerry) Xuheng Chen – Yuefeng Ji – Braden Rustand
Yueren Wang – Shuai Yang**

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

Jerry Chen writes:

I've had a strong interest in mathematics since I was in elementary school. I just loved how one of my math teachers explained where the numbers we see in the daily news came from, "for every cause in the world, there exists a source; and for every source, there will also be a cause." Although the comment may sound circular when you think of it today, but the main idea is that there are always hidden stories behind the data that one has observed, and it is usually beneficial to the public if we strive to find them out. So I decided to dive into the actuarial field to learn more in-depth math-related topics and applications.

I am currently an undergraduate pursuing an honors degree in the Statistics and Actuarial

Science department. I am completing two of the SOA exams in the upcoming two months, and I am committed to obtain my ASA designation. I am currently studying survivor models and life tables in one of my actuarial courses.

Through past work experiences, I've developed myself into a well-rounded candidate to work in the actuarial field. For instance, as a tutor, I learned to communicate with people efficiently and effectively. My current experience as an Academic Director of a student club also prepares me with willingness to take responsibility and initiative.

Yuefeng Ji writes:

I am Yuefeng Ji, a second degree student at SFU. Before studying at SFU, I finished my first degree at Huazhong University of Science & Technology in China with a major in Applied Physics. Now, I am in the Actuarial Science program and find it really interesting. I believe it is a new beginning of my life and I am so excited that I have the opportunity to be an actuary in the future.

Braden Rustand writes:

Ever since I began school, mathematics has been my favourite academic subject because of its logic. It was also one of my best subjects, and by grade eleven I was tutoring struggling math students. In grade twelve, the material became much more interesting, as I learned about mathematical applications to physics and chemistry, and discovered the incredible versatility of calculus. It was at this time that I decided I wanted to study mathematics of some form in university.

Even outside school I had a fascination with how statistics could be used to make scientific judgments about performance, in sports for instance. I was never satisfied when I heard announcers state their opinions of certain players based on their intangible qualities: I always wanted to see verifiable evidence of their performance, and make evaluations on the merits.

Before I transferred to SFU I could not decide between majoring in mathematics, statistics, or even economics. But one day I happened upon the actuarial science part of the SFU website. Upon further consideration and research, I was convinced of how much I would like to major in the subject. The idea of using the tools of mathematics and statistics to provide an indispensable product to consumers and ensure the solvency of the insurers that they rely on struck me as a topic I had to study.

ACMA 210, Interest Theory, was a course that confirmed my enthusiasm for actuarial science, as it gave me a more complete understanding of the financial news that I read so regularly in *The Economist*, a British newsmagazine. But it is ACMA 320, Life Contingency Mathematics, that has been the most interesting and challenging course I have ever taken, as it has required me to apply everything I have learned in previous mathematics and statistics courses, and to improve my programming abilities.

My efforts in actuarial science go beyond coursework. I am a proud member of the Numbers Club, which kindly introduced students to SAS. The workshop taught me a great deal, and I hope that there are many more such sessions in the future.

I am also studying for Society of Actuaries professional examinations. Using what I learned from ACMA 210 and extensive self-study of the remaining material I will write Financial Mathematics on February 18. I also feel well-prepared for Probability because of my success in STAT 270 and 285, and hopefully 330, which I am enrolled in now. My plan is to challenge Probability in July.

Happier I could not be with my decision to join this program. With the SFU actuarial program's high standing with the Society of Actuaries and my experience with professors thus far, I know I am in the right place to learn and pursue my goals. With such great support, I feel as confident and hopeful as ever that I will continue to succeed if I work as hard as I always have.

Yueren Wang writes:

This is my first term in the Actuarial Science major program and my third year at Simon Fraser University. Before entering this program, I was studying for a Statistics Major, in which I have built a solid foundation in Statistics and Mathematics.

Honestly, when I entered the university, I had not considered choosing Actuarial Science as my major or career, and did not even know much about it. After discovering how hard it would be, I still decided to complete all the pre-requisites. Once I became more familiar with the Actuarial profession I fell in love with the field.

In my view Actuarial Science is special in two ways. First, it is different from the pure Mathematics or Statistics, since it is more practical and requires us thinking deeply and carefully rather than just doing the calculation. Second, it differs from finance or economics because it requires the actuary to pay more attention on the nature or process of evaluating the risk or profit.

I know I have a long road ahead before I become an Actuary, and that will be challenging. But I have the confidence of handling it and I will do my best to achieve it.

Shuai Yang writes:

My name is Shuai Yang, I am an international student from China. This is my third term at SFU and my first term in actuarial science. I have met many excellent professors, like John Hu, Gary Parker, Cary Tsai and Robin Insley during this past year. I have also been helped by many of the warm-hearted faculty, staff and TA's. In addition I have made new friends who are very clever, we study together almost every day and we work out the challenging problems together.

I like actuarial science because it involves building mathematical models to study insurance contracts and requires good knowledge of different fields such as statistics, finance, derivatives market and economics. It also helps us to build a system of knowing how statistics and math are built in actuarial science.

I planned to study actuarial science when I was in China, and I heard about SFU at that time. I knew it would not be easy to get into this program so I worked very hard in the last two terms. I tried my best to do everything and I got good grades. It is my pleasure to study actuarial science at SFU. I like the academic environment and the study atmosphere in the program. So far I have been studying higher level actuarial courses for four weeks, it is actually challenging but I think I can handle them. I am sure I can do better in the future to fulfill my dream to become an actuary.

At last, I would like to send my appreciation to the department and the program for giving us so many chances to apply for different scholarships; some of them are from SOA, some from organizations in society, and some from the department. It is no doubt good for us, especially for the international students like me. Thanks again.

Department of Statistics & Actuarial Science Awards/Graduands Reception
12:00 p.m., June 13, 2012, K9509

Undergraduate Awards

Undergraduate Open Scholarships:

(Eric) Xiaoyu Bai 1114, 1117
Scott Brown 1117, 1121
(Jerry) Xuheng Chen 1114, 1117, 1121
Best Guo 1114, 1117, 1121
Jingjiao He 1114, 1117
Phillip Jang 1117
Shi Jin 1114, 1117, 1121
(Jin) Jinwan Kim 1117, 1121
(Yvonne) Yee Wai Kwan 1114, 1117, 1121
(Catherine) Jiayang Li 1117
(Eric) Yunbo Lu 1117, 1121
Zachary Monteith 1117, 1121
(Raymond) Yejun Song 1117, 1121
Yueren Wang 1114, 1121
Yifan Xu 1114
(Yoyo) Ka Yan Yiu 1117, 1121
Di Yu 1121
Yuwen Zhai 1114, 1121
Wei Zhao 1121

Faculty of Science Alumni Scholarship:

Jingjiao He 1114
(Yvonne) Yee Wai Kwan 1114
Yueren Wang 1114

SFU Alumni Scholarship Fund:

Scott Brown 1117
Jingjiao He 1117
Shuai Yang 1117, 1121

J. Newton Robinson Memorial Scholarship:

Scott Brown 1121

Quadra Chemicals Ltd. Scholarship:

Scott Brown 1121

**Alumni Association of the University of Hong Kong,
British Columbia Award:**

Isabelle Yi Jung 1121

April Allen Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship:

Brendan Engle
Diana Sirotic

R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship:

(Eric) Yunbo Lu
Tommy Yip

Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship:

(Sunny) Xiaoting Wang

SSC Endowment Award:

Jeffrey Ting

Statistics & Actuarial Science Endowment Award:

(Jerry) Xuheng Chen
Yuefeng Ji
Braden Rustand
Yueren Wang
Shuai Yang

Towers Watson Scholarship in Actuarial Science:

(Raymond) Yejun Song



Graduate Awards

Provost Prize of Distinction:

Audrey Beliveau 1117-1134

President's Ph.D. Research Stipend:

Jorge Rodriguez 1117

Jean Shin 1117

Special Graduate Entrance Scholarship:

Kasra Yousefi 1121

Randy Sitter Annual Graduate Scholarship in Statistics & Actuarial Science:

Zheng Sun

NSERC PGS D:

Oksana Chkrebti 1107-1134

NSERC CGS D:

Audrey Beliveau 1117-1134

MSc Graduate Fellowship:

Alexey Antonitsin 1117

(Ian) Tianyu Guan 1124

Andrew Henrey 1124

Dilinuer Kuerban 1121, 1124

Zhenhua Lin 1121, 1124

Rachel Lipson 1121, 1124

Jie Liu 1124

Olga Strizhkova 1117

Juan Valero 1124

Huijing Wang 1117, 1121, 1124

Lu Wang 1121, 1124

Qian Wang 1121, 1124

Tingting Wen 1121, 1124

(Lilian) Yu Xia 1121

Yuanyu Yang 1124

(Rose) Meng Yu 1124

PhD Graduate Fellowship:

Jack Davis 1124

Joslin Goh 1124

Shirin Golchi 1124

Harsha Perera 1124

Zheng Sun 1124

Post Doctoral Fellowship Awards

MITACS NCE Postdoctoral Research

Projects Award (Supervisor Carl Schwarz):

Wendell Challenger

Faculty Awards

Elected Fellow of the American Statistical Association:

Joan Hu

President Elect of the Biostatistics Section of the SSC:

Joan Hu

President Elect of the Business and Industrial Statistics Section of the SSC:

Tom Loughin

