

# 2015

## 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/Graduands Reception. A full copy of all of the award winners is available on our web site at

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

The Department has 5 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 Towers Watson Scholarship for students with high standing in Actuarial Science established by the Towers Watson 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 Statistics and Actuarial Science Endowment Awards funded by earnings on our departmental endowment fund.

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### Towers Watson Scholarship

#### Hongshi Li

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.

#### Hongshi Li writes:

I was very happy to learn that I was a recipient of the Towers Watson scholarship. I wish to express my thanks to Towers Watson for their generosity. The financial support will go towards my higher education.

I am a fourth year Actuarial Science student who wants to become an actuary in the future. To realize my career goal, I study hard and maintain my CGPA around 4. In addition to my academic achievements, I try to gain various experiences outside of classrooms. I have successfully completed a co-op term last summer, which allowed me to learn how to work in a real firm. And I am currently working as a research assistant at SFU, which is allowing me to improve my research and analyzing skills.

So far, I have completed two SOA exams, P and FM. I am planning to take C in June 2015. I think I have already found the field that I want to devote myself to. I like what actuaries do, and I want to be an actuary.

The Towers Watson scholarship will allow me to concentrate on my education. Their financial generosity brings me one step closer to my goal and inspires me to help others by giving back to the community. I hope one day I will be able to help other students achieve their goals just as they have helped me.

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# **Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship**

## **Evan Thompson**

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.

### **Evan Thompson writes:**

Receiving this scholarship is an honor and privilege. It is incredibly motivating to be recognized in such a tangible way, and to see that there is acknowledgement for students pursuing this career path.

As a fourth year Actuarial Science student at SFU, I have undergone many of the trials that the program presents. Late nights finishing assignments and studying for exams are a given, and have led to some of my most unforgettable moments of academic growth. Piecing together large concepts that seem incomprehensible to start is very satisfying.

Through work experience I have witnessed that these skills are similarly important in the actuarial field, where the work's intricacies lead to persistent challenge and growth. These challenges are what keep the work interesting, and what have me so excited to continue my pursuit. The greater challenges that are presented as I complete further exams and become an actuary are exciting.

Outside of school, I spend free time performing improvised comedy shows in Vancouver, and recently in New York City. Improv is a great hobby which bolsters communication skills, builds close friend groups, develops public speaking ability, and exercises thinking on your feet. I feel that all of these skills are very applicable in any situation that involves solving unique problems or communicating with people; I would recommend it!

Receiving the Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship in Actuarial Science is very motivating. It will help pay for textbooks, study guides, and other necessary costs in becoming an actuary. Thank you to the Pacific Blue Cross for your support!

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# **R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship**

## **Hao Chu – Di Wu**

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.

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# Statistics and Actuarial Science Endowment Awards

## Award to Recognize the Statistical Society of Canada

### Mengyi Li

This award is offered to an undergraduate student who is a declared major/honors in Statistics and/or Actuarial Science and who is promoting Statistics and Probability. The criteria for selection for the award are academic merit and a commitment to the mission of the Statistical Society of Canada (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.

### **Mengyi Li writes:**

First of all, I would like to thank the Statistical Society of Canada (SSC) for having the generosity of providing this scholarship. Being selected as the 2014-2015 recipient of the award is an honour.

In 2013, I returned to Vancouver from my four-month formal exchange in Kansai Gaidai University, Japan. The journey gave me “buffer time” to make up my mind and step into the world of actuarial science after business school. ACMA210 was the first course I took in the actuarial program, and it was also the first course that made me feel like the workload was twice the usual amount. Not only did the material cover the intricacies of mathematics and finance but also economics and business, which totally opened my eyes to this discipline.

In 2014, I finally understood how insurance companies price their life insurance products after taking ACMA320 with Ms. Barbara Sanders. I would like to thank Barbara for patiently explaining the concepts to me in her office (many times!) as well as for her generous help as the reference and consultant for my professional career. Many things have happened in the summer of 2014. I was selected as one of the 12 students to assist professor J.F. Williams with a summer project for Fraser Health Authority. This project helped me develop my statistical analysis skills and strengthen my “nerves” to do the presentation in front of the executives of the institution. My team received the first place undergraduate project award at the Symposium on Mathematics and Computation organized by SFU. Here I would also like to thank J.F. for all his help during this past summer and for his help towards my professional life over the years. Even more exciting, I passed Exam FM and P and was selected as one of the two actuarial students to fly to Chicago to represent SFU at the SOA 2014 CAE Summit.

After this experience, I began another journey and went to the capital city of my home country, China, to do my first co-op with PricewaterhouseCoopers.

A big year for both my professional and academic career was 2015. In the Spring, I was elected as the president of SASSA. The SASSA executive team worked its best to serve all students by creating a friendly and positive community, providing networking opportunities between the faculty and industry. We did a great job, and I had the pleasure to serve students in the Statistics and Actuarial Science Department this year. I was taking two ACMA courses, 425 and 315 with Professors Yi Lu and Cary Tsai this spring. I want to thank both of them for helping me understand actuarial science in depth thanks to their excellent professional knowledge and patience. Apart from the homework and extracurricular activities in SFU, I also collaborated with three other smart and enthusiastic actuarial students in the program to participate in a national case competition with Munich Re. From this three month case, we have learnt how to analyze a problem and create models like an actuary, and we finally went to Toronto and presented our project to the executives of Munich Re. Lastly, I would also like to thank the program coordinator, Dr. Gary Parker. Thank you for encouraging me to keep on working when I was taking ACMA320, which gave me a great amount of confidence to continue working very hard to become a good actuary.

My small achievements would not have been possible without the help of excellent fellow students and professors along the way in the past two years. I am now working on my third co-op term with Bank of Canada as research assistant. By working alongside with these brilliant economists, their enthusiasm and professionalism inspired me to become a professional who is truly enjoying and skilled at what she is doing.

My final year in the actuarial program will be 2016. I will keep on working and honing my skills to become a great actuary like the people who have inspired me.

## **Academic Merit Award**

### **Yifan Hao – Chuyuan Lin**

This award is offered to students who are registered honors or major students in Actuarial Science or Statistics. The primary criterion for selection is academic merit.

#### **Chuyuan Lin writes:**

My name is Chuyuan Lin, an international student from China. This is my fourth semester studying in the Statistics program. I have been determined to be a science student since I studied in high school, and I had a great interest to learn more about mathematics, statistics and economics. After graduating from high school, I came to Canada and studied at Fraser International College (FIC). When I graduated from FIC, I transferred to SFU and started working on my goal of getting into the Statistics and Actuarial Science department. Now, the dream comes true.

When I transferred to SFU, my hardest but also the happiest university time began. The exams became much more difficult, and the homework's were twice as long as those in college. In order to catch up, I used to sleep only 5 hours a day and summarize into two notebooks important exercises for my statistics and mathematics courses. Eventually, I got used to the life at SFU and received some good grades.

Even though I am very busy when studying at SFU, I still love to do some volunteer jobs in my spare time. I love to share my experience and passion with others, and make more friends, which is the reason why I have been a peer education and mentorship volunteer at FIC for more than one year. Also, I got two meaningful and enjoyable volunteer jobs at SFU, a global partner to help transfer students in the GPS program, and an exam-aid

tutor of the Student Offering Support (SOS) association. Through volunteering, I made a lot of friends, and also improved my communication and interpersonal skills a lot.

Finally I want to thank my parents, all my friends, advisors and professors who help me a lot. I believe that without their help, I wouldn't get such a good grades and have this happy life in Canada. I really want to thank the advisor, Professor Robin Insley, who helped me a lot, and encouraged me like a close friend or my parents would do every time I came to him. The other person I want to express my appreciation to is Professor Gary Parker, who is willing to spend hours helping us solve our problems even during holidays. The Statistics and Actuarial Science department is one full of passion, professional ethics and friendliness. To quote an old saying in my country to express my pleasure to study in such an amazing department, I want to say: I must have done something good in my previous life, so the god would choose to put me in such a wonderful place!

**Department of Statistics & Actuarial Science Awards/Graduands Reception  
June 10, 2015, 1:00pm, K9509**

**Undergraduate Awards**

**Undergraduate Open Scholarship:**

Anqi Chen 1147, 1151  
Mengting Ding 1147, 1151  
Jingxue Feng 1147  
Yi Fan Hao 1151  
Yee Wai Kwan 1144  
Hongshi Li 1147, 1151  
Mengyi Li 1144  
Chuyuan Lin 1151  
Yufeng Qi 1147, 1151  
Sonja Surjanovic 1144  
Evan Thompson 1147, 1151  
Yu Wang 1144  
Jason Wong 1147  
Di Wu 1144, 1147  
Yifan Wu 1144, 1151  
Shuai Yang 1144  
Lu Yi 1151  
Di Yu 1151  
Ouyang Zhou 1151

**Academic Excellence Entrance Scholarship:**

Kristen Bystrom 1147  
Kristina Slaven 1147

**International Academic Excellence Entrance Scholarship:**

Lillie Lovatt 1147

**International Co-operative Education Award:**

Jeremy Choy 1147  
Hongshi Li 1144  
Mengyi Li 1147  
Yifan Wu 1147  
Di Yu 1144  
Yi Zhou 1147

**Department of Mathematics Award:**

Layla Trummer 1147

**Beedie School of Business Alumni Scholarship**

Mengyi Li 1144  
Di Wu 1144

**SFU Alumni Scholarship Fund:**

Anqi Chen 1151  
Hongshi Li 1147, 1151  
Chuyuan Lin 1151  
Sonja Surjanovic 1147

**Faculty of Science Alumni Scholarship:**

Shuai Yang 1144

**R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship:**

Hao Chu 1151  
Di Wu 1151

**Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship:**

Evan Thompson 1151

**Statistics & Actuarial Science Endowment Award:**

Mengyi Li – (SSC) 1151  
Yi Fan Hao 1151  
Chuyuan Lin 1151

**Towers Watson Scholarship in Actuarial Science:**

Hongshi Li 1151



## Graduate Awards

### **Special Graduate Entrance Scholarship:**

Michael Johnson 1147  
Dejie (Katherine) Kong 1147  
Dongmeng Liu 1147

### **CD Nelson Memorial Graduate Entrance Scholarship:**

Christina Nieuwoudt 1144-1181

### **Provost Prize of Distinction:**

Christina Nieuwoudt 1144-1181  
William Ruth 1147-1154

### **NSERC CGS Masters Scholarship:**

William Ruth 1147-1154  
Sonja Surjanovic 1154-1161

### **President's PhD Scholarship:**

Jack Davis 1151  
Huijing Wang 1151

### **Randy Sitter Annual Graduate Scholarship in Statistics & Actuarial Science:**

Michael Grosskopf 1151

### **Mitacs Globalink Graduate Fellowship:**

Lidan (Lucy) Zhang

### **MSc Graduate Fellowship:**

Yang (Maple) Bai 1154  
Yen-Chen (Jenny) Chen 1151  
Sharla Gelfand 1151  
Sven Haunerland 1154  
Michael Johnson 1151, 1154  
Dejie (Katherine) Kong 1154  
Bingying (Doris) Li 1154  
Mengyun (Monica) Li 1154  
Zetong (Cecilia) Li 1154  
Xinying (Serene) Liang 1151, 1154  
Chenlu Shi 1154  
Thilini Surendra Acharige 1154  
Terry Tang 1154  
Lidan (Lucy) Zhang 1151  
Bin Zhao 1154

### **PhD Graduate Fellowship:**

Chamara Karunanayaka 1154  
Charith Karunarathna 1154  
Luyao Lin 1154  
Yunlong (Ben) Nie 1151  
Christina Nieuwoudt 1151  
Wijendra Premarathna 1151  
Peijun (Perry) Sang 1151  
Huijing Wang 1154





## **Faculty Awards**

**Elected Council of Section Representative for the ASA Section on Statistics in Sports:**  
Tim Swartz

**2013 Wilcoxon Prize for “Best practical application paper appearing in the 2013 issues of Technometrics”:**

Derek Bingham, Matthew T. Pratola, Stephan R. Sain, Michael Wiltberger & E. Joshua Rigler  
For their article “Fast Sequential Computer Model Calibration of Large Nonstationary Spatial-Temporal Processes

**2015 Dean of Graduate Studies Award for Graduate Supervision:**  
Derek Bingham

**2013 Named Canada Research Chair in Biostatistics & Environmetrics - NSERC Tier II:**  
Jiguo Cao

**Awarded the 2015 SSC Gold Medal:**  
Richard Lockhart

**Won the 2015 Sloan Sport Analytics Conference Research Competition for their paper “Counterpoints: Advanced Defensive Metrics for NBA Basketball”:**  
Luke Bornn, Alexander Franks, Andy Miller & Kirk Goldsberry

**Won the 2015 Sloan Sport Analytics Conference Top Poster Prize for their poster "Move or Die: How Ball Movement Creates Open Shots in the NBA"**  
Luke Bornn, Kirk Goldsberry, Alex D'Amour & Dan Cervone

**Appointed to the advisory board of "Prozone Sports' Advanced Performance Lab"**  
Luke Bornn





## Graduands 1144-1151

### ***Undergraduate Graduands:***

#### **Actuarial Science Honours:**

Dongli Chen  
Yee Wai Kwan  
Shuai Yang

#### **Actuarial Science Major:**

Yun Ting Mabel Ang  
Thomas Dodge  
Renhe Huang  
Shang Shang Liu  
Ming Jun (Nicholas) Lu  
Charles (Jonathan) Royalty

#### **Statistics Major:**

Aurelea Au  
Leo Chan  
Senyang (Sen) Chen  
Siwei Chen  
Stanley Chow  
Wenting (Wendy) Dang  
Patrick Daniele  
Christoffer Dharma  
Chao Du  
Zheng Fa  
Zhihong Fang  
Naiyuan Guo  
Sung Woo Ha  
Yugenia He  
Pei Shi (Nicole) Hong  
Yi Hong  
Shu Jiang  
Minjoo Kang  
Hang Li  
Licong (Summer) Li  
Tu Li  
Jing Han (Fiona) Liu  
Yongxu Liu  
Xumin Lou  
MinJae Park  
Qianwen Qiu  
Sarah Rathwell

### **Statistics Major (cont.):**

Dandan Song  
Hailun (Helen) Sun  
Sonja Surjanovic  
Terry Tang  
Miguel Valdez  
Haixu Wang  
Jie (John) Wang  
Ni Wang  
Xi (Joey) Wang  
Hao Wu  
Huan Yu Xiong  
Biyang Xu  
Haiyun Xu  
Ji Yeon Yoo  
Sung-Eun Yu  
Chanfan Zheng  
Dongnan Zheng  
Haoxuan (Charlie) Zhou  
Liji (Christy) Zhou  
Yu Zou

### **Statistics Minor:**

Xiaoxia Bian  
Hai Bing (Kevin) Chen  
Chantal Cruickshank  
Rui Di (Lindsey) Gao  
Kwok Hay (Alfred) Ng  
Sayeemin Rahman  
Chang-Po Wang  
Ye Yuan  
Huiming Zhang

### ***Graduate Graduands:***

Sherry Chen MSc  
Joslin Goh PhD  
Tianyu Guan MSc  
Kanna Nirmalkanna MSc  
Nathaniel Payne MSc  
Pulindu Ratnasekera MSc  
Elena Szefer MSc  
Fei Wang MSc  
Jiaying (Vicky) Weng MSc  
Yi Xiong MSc  
Annie Yu MSc  
Sabrina Zhang MSc