

## **2008-2009 Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship**

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.

### **Phillip Jang**

I am currently in my third year at Simon Fraser University majoring in Actuarial Science with a minor in Mathematics. The minor in math is for enriching my learning experience, and use down the line for graduate school if I should ever need to go. I have so far completed the first two exams from the Society of Actuaries (P and FM) in 2008, and plan to take exam MLC this May.

I came across the actuarial career late in high school when my counselor introduced me to the subject. Thinking the career was a good fit for my skills, I decided to go to Simon Fraser University to give it a try. 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 Pacific Blue Cross 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 2008 was a profoundly challenging and colourful experience which began with Gary Parker's infamous ACMA 320 in the spring, which alone required well over 100 hours of study to minimally grasp concepts; and ended with my representation of the Statistics and Actuarial Science department on the Putnam Mathematics Competition (A 12-question 6-hour undergraduate math exam with a usual median score of 0 or 1 points out of 120) in December. I managed to solve two questions on the exam, scoring 20 points and placing 619 out of 3627. In between the two terms, I took courses to finish my VEE requirements, and using my knowledge of interest theory from exam FM material, I tutored students in my finance class. Compared to my perfect 4.33 for courses taken in 2007, my CGPA as of fall 2008 rests at a modest 4.22 as a result of the difficulty of the year.

I have spent this term doing a COOP placement at Westcoast Actuaries Inc., which is a consulting company specializing in Individual Pension Plans, a type of defined benefit plan. It is 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 studied.

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 honour to be considered for the Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship, and I give my fullest gratitude to my sponsors at Pacific Blue Cross. I look forward to all the challenges that lie ahead, and I am ready to continue giving it my all. Bring it on!