

# 2013-2014 Statistics & Actuarial Science Endowment Award

## Award to Recognize the Statistical Society of Canada

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).

### **Sonja Surjanovic writes:**

Growing up in a mathematical family, I always valued the importance of quantitative reasoning. I counted everything, from the number of steps it took to get home from my elementary school, to the proportion of hours per week that were spent learning mathematics (it was never enough). Mathematics was always my favourite subject, and when I was young I dreamed of one day “learning all of math.”

I first encountered statistics in an introductory course at SFU. Due to its quantitative nature, I enjoyed it from the very beginning. I found the combinatorics and probability problems particularly fun. Learning about the different applications of statistics helped me to see its significance in the world. I was amazed to find out about all of the fields in which statistics was of vital importance. This is what inspired me to pursue statistics in my undergraduate career.

Throughout my four years at SFU, my enthusiasm for statistics has grown exponentially. Having a group of friends who are equally passionate for the subject has been very important to me; I remember the excitement that stirred our entire row in the lecture hall when we first saw the proof of the Central Limit Theorem. The beauty of a proof seems to increase tenfold when others are equally fascinated by it.

I have enjoyed two NSERC USRA research terms in the Statistics department at SFU, working with Dr. Derek Bingham. I found research to be extremely interesting; it was both fun and challenging (perhaps those two words are synonyms of each other). The two terms provided me with the opportunity to experience graduate student life, and have motivated me to pursue graduate studies.

Although I no longer count the number of steps between home and school, I have the privilege of being surrounded by statistical thinking in my academic life. I look forward to expanding my knowledge and understanding of statistics in the future. The elegance and potential of this field are what keep me so keenly interested.