

## **2005-2006 Statistics & Actuarial Science Endowment Award**

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

### **Raymond Chiang**

When I first arrived at Port Moody Secondary, I sat at the back of classrooms, knew next to no one, and had serious doubts about the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program. But one day, my math teacher asked us a peculiar question, "Anyone here know what is an actuary?"

I admit the job description did not immediately captivate me. I took note of the title simply because my strength has always been in mathematics and I wanted to make it my career. Nevertheless, I knew the prospect was bleak; as Randy (Dr. Sitter) had bluntly put it, "Math majors should consider statistics-if you want to eat." Being an actuary seemed like an acceptable compromise at the time.

Ironically, as IB bombarded me with essays, research papers, lab reports, and oral commentaries, I suddenly found myself enjoying the program. I became tight friends with my fellow "dips", students in the same diploma program, though many of whom later decided that this piece of paper was not as valuable as their teenage social life. Nonetheless, I became addicted to being challenged. I was forced to face my weaknesses, such as public speaking, and I improved. I took on more responsibilities, began to think critically, ran clubs, and participated in competitions. I graduated from IB with no regrets and as a better person.

I also graduated with a much clearer goal: to become an actuary. Actuarial science is a very broad subject; it spans across multiple disciplines such as mathematics, statistics, finance, and computer science, all of which are my interests. It is also very challenging and rewarding. The prestige of the program attracts the brightest students of SFU and I find their diligence infectious. It is also fascinating to meet students from different parts of the world and from different stages of their academic career.

As for my future, I will soon begin an eight-month co-operative work term at Pacific Blue Cross. I look forward to applying my actuarial and statistical knowledge to the field of health insurance. The experience should help me decide whether I should focus on the life and health discipline or the property and casualty side of actuarial science. I plan to complete the first two SOA exams during my work term as well. Along with my new duties as an ASNA (Actuarial Students' National Association) delegate for SFU, my next few semesters will certainly be action-packed. By setting lofty goals, I expect my graduation from SFU to be as fruitful as my graduation from IB.