

2016-2017 Statistics & Actuarial Science Endowment Award

Academic Merit Award

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.

Philippa Swartz writes:

As I've grown up with a statistics professor for a dad, I was exposed to the discipline at a young age. Throughout my adolescence I was a competitive highland dancer, and my dad and I often bonded by "analyzing" the results of each and every competition. Although we didn't use any sophisticated methods (mostly looking for patterns in the judging) my curiosity for statistics was sparked.

This carried on when I was in high school, at that point my dad and I would plot my racing times (when I competed in cross-country). Thus, when the time came to pick my major for applying to SFU it was no surprise I chose statistics.

During my past few years at SFU I've been very fortunate to have been exposed to lots of interesting research and applications within statistics. I completed NSERCs with Professor Derek Bingham as well as Professor Joan Hu. I was also able to get involved with a project with Professor William Sheel (UBC) through Dr. Bingham. This was really interesting to me as Dr. Sheel is a professor in exercise physiology, an area that I've always been interested in. I've gotten the chance to take quite a few classes in kinesiology at SFU, and I recently declared my minor in the subject.

In addition to my time exploring statistics and kinesiology, I also got involved in a psychology research lab within the past year at SFU. I volunteered in Professor Jodi Viljoen's lab, where the ongoing project is trying to predict recidivism in youth. I really enjoyed my time in the lab and this opened my eyes to all the other opportunities there are within statistics (as Dr. Viljoen's lab used a lot of statistics in their research).

During my past few years I've also spent time volunteering at various places outside of SFU. I volunteered at the Burquitlam Lions Senior Center for a year, and have been a Go Girls mentor for over a year. Go Girls is a program in which two mentors visit a middle school once a week to teach the girls about living active lives. I'm really passionate about this program as I feel like it empowers young girls at a critical time in their lives.

Outside of school and volunteering, I also enjoy running, cooking, and reading. I tutor several high school students in math each semester which is also something I enjoy.