

# 2003

## Statistics and Actuarial Science Awards

The Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science is pleased to honor its students and faculty every year in our Annual Awards Ceremony. A full copy of the all of the award winners is available on our web site at <http://www.stat.sfu.ca/Awards>.

The Department has six major awards:

- The Watson Wyatt Scholarship for students with high standing in Actuarial Science established by the Watson Wyatt Company.
- The Statistical Society of Canada (SSC) award established by Canada's professional society.
- The Statistics and Actuarial Science Endowment Awards funded by earnings on our endowment fund.

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### Watson Wyatt Scholarship

#### James Wong

This scholarship is awarded annually to a student of high merit. The student must have completed ACMA310 to be eligible.

James Wong writes: "The truth is, I was not born to think that my dream or my future career is going to be one within the field of actuarial consulting. I came from Hong Kong at the age of ten. My father being in the restaurant industry for more than 20 years, started up a Chinese restaurant in Vancouver. I was brought up in a typical Chinese family that supported the profession of medicine. Yet, even before entrance to university, I knew that I would not become a doctor. Despite the intuition, I did not want to disappoint my mother without a fair evaluation of the medicine profession. Therefore, I was enrolled in the UBC science programme. After a year of research and

exploration in the field (including volunteering at hospitals), I have decided to quite my academic life at UBC and transferred to SFU."

"However late the decision is, I am very glad that I made the decision last year to enroll in the actuarial programme, and therefore quitting the career path as a medical doctor."

I found passion in the actuarial science field, because the critical thinking and analyzing aspect of the subject seems more fascinating than the fields I have been in before. It is also this aspect of the field that led me to believe that the actuarial profession has more challenges ahead of me than in other professional fields."

"Since I am still 19, having passed the legal drinking age birthday less than half a year ago, I have not very well thought of a future plan yet. Possibly one of being an actuary engaged in the actuarial consulting profession, or engage in one of the academic institution of high reputation down across the border for a graduate degree."

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## **Statistical Society of Canada**

### **Clement Wu**

The [Statistical Society of Canada](#) Award will be presented to an undergraduate student who is a declared major/honors in Statistics and/or Actuarial Science. The criteria for selection for the award are academic merit and a commitment to the mission of the 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.

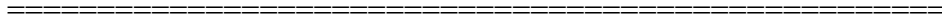
This award was generously endowed by the Statistical Society of Canada using proceeds of the net revenue from the SSC Annual Meeting held at Simon Fraser University in 2001.

Clement Wu writes: What is actuarial science anyway? This is the second most frequent question from my family and friends, second only to the typical "How are you doing?" Frankly, two years ago, I still believed that actuarial science is somehow related to agricultural science, the reason being the slight resemblance in their pronunciations. Now, having passed two actuarial exams, in addition to completing an eight-month work term at Watson Wyatt Worldwide, an actuarial and consulting firm, I can speak with confidence that actuarial science is the study of anything that involves the access of financial risk, and the details can go on and on.

I was introduced to the field of actuarial science when I was a second year computing science student. My affection for the subject has rooted in the heart ever since. The analytic and mathematical skills employed to make survival and financial predictions vastly amazed me. Thus, I changed not only my major, but also my career goal; I am striving to become an actuarial consultant. There are eight exams and one professional development course organized by the Society of Actuaries. Like many actuarial students, my goal is to finish them all and earn the designation as a Professional Actuary. Furthermore, to learn how actuarial knowledge is utilized in practice, I work as a co-op student in Watson Wyatt Worldwide, an actuarial and consulting firm. Being in the same environment with professionals in the field, my understanding in different actuarial practices expands everyday. Such knowledge would be invaluable in the future as I seek employment.

This semester, I have been quite busy in terms of both school and work. I am working as a Co-op student in the daytime while taking two actuarial science courses at night. I find time management is absolutely essential, as I need to divide my time among work, classes, assignments, and studying. Moreover, I am planning to write Course 3 in May. Even though it can be

quite stressful at times, I find self-satisfaction in my busy schedule, as I am another step closer to reaching my goal. You never know how far you can go until you try, and I am trying my utmost to achieve my goal.



## **Statistics and Actuarial Science Endowment Awards**

This award is presented to students in the major/honor program with high academic standing.

### **Dong Chen**

Dong Chen writes: "I got my first degree ten years ago and worked in the financial investment field in China. When I learned about the actuary profession from the newspaper four years ago, I knew immediately that was the career I was looking for. It could integrate all my knowledge and skills. But frankly I didn't know what the actuary actually doing besides setting insurance premium at that time, and there wasn't much program and FSA or ASA in China.

After an Internet search, I found that North America was the best place to study actuarial science and develop my career. So I immigrated to Vancouver two years ago with my wife. I have no relatives and friends here. I encountered tremendous challenge as a new comer in this totally new environment.

Fortunately, I was accepted by SFU in the fall 2001 and back to school again. I directly took the actuarial course because of my previous background and found it fascinating. I like to deal with number and solve problem with uncertainty. I'm not only the top student in the program and passed the first two SOA exams, but also got a co-op job last fall semester. This co-op experience strengthened my confidence that I have chosen the

right career path.

I hope when I graduate in 2004, I could have 4 to 5 semester's coop experience which is in different fields of actuarial science so that I can determine my future direction, and pass 4 to 5 SOA exams which will help me become ASA soon after graduation.

### **Lin He**

Lin He write: "Like most students, I didn't grow up with a dream of being an actuary. I learned about actuarial career one year after I got my first bachelor degree in Communications. I made up my mind to quit my job and to go back to school after I researched this field and thought that it would be a good fit for me. The study in Actuarial Science and Statistics convinces me that I have made a right decision. The more I learned, the more I saw actuarial science as the way for me to combine my experience in business with my math and statistics strengths.

My goal is to be in a profession where I can use my potentials as much as possible to help people out. Actuary is the very career that I am looking for.

### **Julia Lin**

Julia Lin writes: "My family has always been a great support and motivation to me in my life. It was also my parent's idea to emigrate the whole family from Taiwan to Canada just to provide a better living and educational environment for me and my brother. While in Taiwan, my father did not have a stable career, but now he is a tour guide in Canada introducing all the famous and beautiful attractions of Western Canada to tour groups from Taiwan. In contrast to my father, who shows up at home only about twice a month, my mother is a typical housewife taking care of my brother's and my everyday life.

If I were to say that I would not have been who I am now without my dearest

parent's support, I might as well say that I would not have made a clear educational goal without my older brother's advice. When I first came to Canada, I soon became involved in the high school study at the age of 14. With a little bit of talent and plenty of hard work, I was able to overcome the language barrier and complete my high school education with a fairly high academic merit. However, when I was applying for university, somehow I could not find a program that interested me. It was my brother, who introduced me to Actuarial Science, and helped me to start a meaningful pursuance of education at SFU.

During my first actuarial course, I found it fascinating and challenging, making me wonder how it would be to actually work in an actuarial profession. No matter what career path I will take, I hope that I can live a life as meaningful as it can be, not just to satisfy my parent's anticipation towards me, but also to make my life regretless.

### **Wei Clair Zhang**

Wei Zhang writes: "I came to Vancouver about two years ago. I started my study in SFU as a computer science major, but soon realized that pure computing is not my interest after taking several computer science courses. Then I researched other areas where I still could use my strong math skills and found actuarial science program. I was quite fascinated to see how widely mathematics techniques and statistic models, combined with economic and finance knowledge can be applied in actuarial field. And I thought this would be something I'd like to do for my career, so I made a switch to enroll in actuarial science program.

I worked as a TA in STAT workshop for one semester, and currently I am working on a research project to estimate number of fish in a lake. It helps me to gain the real world experience in scientific research.

I will finish my required courses and graduate next year. I will continue to write SOA exams and try to get the professional designation as an actuary. And I probably will pursue my master degree either in statistics or actuarial science too.

**Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science Awards Reception  
12:30 p.m., May 29, 2003 - K 9509**

**Graduate Awards**

**NSERC Post-graduate Scholarship**

**2003/04**

**PGSA**

David Beaudoin

**PGSB**

Jason Loeppky

Jason Nielsen

**2002/03**

**PGSA**

Simon Bonner

**PGSB**

Crystal Linkletter

**Faculty of Science Graduate Entrance  
Scholarship (Fraser Valley College)**

Stephen Overduin

**Special Graduate Entrance Scholarship**

Jeremy Hamm (02-3)

Chunfang Lin (02-3)

**WNAR Student Paper Award**

Grace Chiu

**NSERC Postdoctoral Fellowship**

Grace Chiu

**PhD Graduate Fellowships**

**03-1**

Wen Lu

**03-2**

Laura Cowen

Farouk Nathoo

**MSc Graduate Fellowships**

**02-3**

Kelly Burkett

Jacqueline Gregory

**President's Ph.D. Stipend**

**03-1**

Jason Sutherland

**C.D. Nelson Scholarship**

**03-1**

Crystal Linkletter

**ASA/EIA Research Fellow Award**

Crystal Linkletter

**Faculty Awards**

**Canada Research Chair in Industrial  
Statistics**

Derek Bingham

**3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Journal of Statistics Read  
Paper Session**

Richard Lockhart, Michael Stephens

**Fellow of the American Statistical  
Association**

Randy Sitter

**Heart and Stroke Foundation Award of  
Merit**

David MacLean (Health Hero)

**2002 SSC Service Medal Award**

Richard Lockhart

**International Statistical Institute (ISI)**

Larry Weldon

**Newman Award for creation of fish  
recovery box**

Rick Routledge

## Undergraduate Awards

### Undergraduate Open Scholarships during 02-2, 02-3, 03-1

Andrew Balo (02-3, 03-1)  
Jessica Ou Dang (02-2, 03-1)  
Debra Fulton (02-3)  
Tyler Gray (02-3, 03-1)  
Joseph Kwok (02-2)  
Rowena Lai (02-3, 03-1)  
Lai Yin Lee (02-2, 02-3, 03-1)  
Dawei Li (02-2, 02-3, 03-1)  
Julia Lin (02-2, 03-1)  
Xiao Lu Wang (02-3, 03-1)  
Kwang James Wong (02-2, 02-3, 03-1)  
Clement Wu (02-2, 03-1)  
Henry Yuen (02-2)

### R. Purewal Memorial Scholarship

Wei Claire Zhang (02-2)

### Watson-Wyatt & Company Scholarship in Actuarial Science

Kwang James Wong (03-1)

### W & A McMahon Scholarship

Xiao Lu Wang (02-3)

### High Academic Performance in Upper Division Statistics/Actuarial Science Courses

Won K. Dean Chang, **Acma 335** (02-2)  
Gurbir Dhadwal, **Stat 302** (03-1)  
Tyler Vincent Gray, **Stat 350** (03-1)  
Greg Philip Jones, **Acma 490** (03-1)  
Lisa Helene Kirkham, **Stat 403** (03-1)  
Tsun Y. Joseph Kwok, **Stat 350** (02-2)  
Dawei David Li, **Stat 402** (03-1)  
Nga Bong Bosco Mok, **Stat 302** (02-2)  
Jason Pal, **Stat 490** (03-1)  
Zozo Tam, **MSSC 480** (03-1)  
Stanley Wong, **Acma 425** (02-3)  
Pui Man Kelly Ying, **Stat 490** (02-2)  
Nancy Xiao B. Zhang, **Acma 310** (02-3)

### Statistics and Actuarial Science Endowment Award for excellent achievement in the Majors and Honors program

Dong Chen  
Lin He  
Julia Lin  
Wei Claire Zhang

### SSC Endowment Award

Clement Wu

### SFU Alumni Scholarship

Dong Chen (02-2)  
Lin He (02-3,03-1)  
Alex Kwan (02-3)  
Joseph Kwok (02-2)  
Xiao Lu Wang (02-2,03-1)

### Paul Cote ENSC Scholarship

Alex Kwan (03-1)

### ENSC Project Award

Alex Kwan (02-3)

### SFU Piping Award

Mary Ellen Bruce (02-3)

### Bruce Coles Scholarship

Wei Claire Zhang (02-3, 03-1)

### Management and Systems Science Graduation Award

Debra Fulton

### Management and Systems Science Prize

Yin Bin Li (3<sup>rd</sup> year award)  
Jane Rozina (4<sup>th</sup> year award)