

2006

Statistics and Actuarial Science Awards

The Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science is pleased to honor its students, staff, and faculty every year during our Annual Awards Reception. A full copy of all of the award winners is available on our web site at

<http://www.stat.sfu.ca/programs/awards.html>

The Department has 6 major awards:

- The Watson Wyatt Scholarship for students with high standing in Actuarial Science established by the Watson Wyatt Company.
- The Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship for students with high standing in Actuarial Science established by Pacific Blue Cross.
- The Statistical Society of Canada (SSC) award
- The Statistics and Actuarial Science Endowment Awards (three awards) funded by earnings on our departmental endowment fund.

Watson Wyatt Scholarship

Feng Li

This scholarship is awarded annually to a student in an approved Actuarial Science program who has completed ACMA320. It is granted on the basis of academic performance.

Feng Li writes:

When I arrived at Vancouver International Airport as a new immigrant from China a few years ago, I knew nothing about actuary. I got my Bachelor Degree of Engineering in China and worked in computer industry for nearly 10 years, but the new life in Canada just gave me an opportunity to think about a new career. I was looking for a career which can use all of those skills I was very good at: mathematics, computer, and interest with finance and investment subjects. It did not take me a long time to find actuary is what I was looking for. In the spring semester of 2005, I got the admission of the actuarial science major program after the first two struggling semesters in SFU.

The study in this program seemed more interesting than I expected before. All of those courses are fascinating. During the study time, my first child little Alexander was born here. I was hilarious but became very busy with bottles and diapers while taking classes. I'm very proud of myself that I succeeded in managing a balanced time for my family and my study. I kept my good GPA and still enjoyed a good time with my family at the same time. Here I must thank my thoughtful wife who took most responsibility for taking care of little Alexander.

I'm just at the end of my program and doing my first co-op term in retirement department of Mercer Human Resource Consulting. I come to realize the knowledge I studied from our actuarial program is very necessary and useful for me to work in this area. I passed two SOA exams and am going to write two more exams in this May. I've got the admission of the master program for actuarial science and statistics in this department and am very excited with further study and research in this fascinating area.

At the end, I must express my sincere gratitude to the professors and staffs in this department who provide me a lot of valuable advices and give me tremendous help. Without their support, I could not go so far. There is still a long way for me to achieve my future career goal as an excellent actuary, therefore I need to continue working hard and hope I can accelerate this journey.

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Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship

Rong Li

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.

Rong Li writes:

Four years ago, I joined my family in Canada to try a different life style. As a new comer, when I was overcoming the first obstacles such as language problems, culture shocks etc, I was also searching for something that I really wanted to do--- a career that I would love in life long period. Since I have always been interested in numbers and actuarial science involves a lot of math and statistics, I chose to go back to school to study actuarial science at SFU. After three years study, I'd say that I made the right decision at that time.

I really enjoyed my life and my study here in SFU. In the past three years, I did very well in all my courses. The more I learned about actuary, the more I liked it, especially its applications in real business world. My experience of going back to school after several years working is also very valuable to my studying. I know exactly what I want and what I need to do to reach my goals.

Meanwhile, as a wife and a mother of two children, I always tried to spend as much time as possible with my family to perform my role, even though sometimes it's really not easy to spare time from high volume assignments and readings. At my hard times, thanks to my husband and my kids, their love and support made it possible for me to find the perfect balance point in my life and study.

I planned to graduate next year. My next move will be graduate study or hunting for a job in actuarial filed. I believe that will be lots of fun!

Statistical Society of Canada

(Rina) Meng Jie Wang

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.

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.

Rina Wang writes:

I immigrated to Canada about four years ago with my parents after finishing high school in China. I was majoring in Science at high school and Mathematics was my favourite subject. Because of my excellent grades in Mathematics, I was the only teaching assistant in my class for 3 years.

Before coming to SFU, I took the first year's university transfer courses at Langara College. I got straight A+'s in Mathematics, Statistics and Economics courses, and received the Ernest E. Livesey Memorial Mathematics Scholarship in 2003. My Mathematics teacher

suggested that I study Mathematics at university. I felt that Statistics, Economics and Finance are all as interesting as Mathematics and I wanted to do something more than pure Math. At the same time, I met Natalia Lysenko, who was my TA and classmate in many courses, and learned about the Actuarial Science program at SFU from her. After some research on Actuarial Science, I believed it would be a good choice for my university study and future career path.

ACMA 310 was my first course in the Actuarial Science program at SFU. I had learnt about interest calculation before, but never thought there could be so many different types of questions about interest and present value calculations. I was amazed by the course and decided to continue studying in Actuarial Science. I have now completed most of the ACMA courses. The ACMA courses were very challenging at the beginning, but soon became very interesting once I understood the concepts behind the formulas. Also thanks to these ACMA courses, I have passed SOA Exams 1 – 4 already and I'm currently starting the Fundamentals of Actuarial Practice (FAP) modules.

I have been doing my 12-month co-op work term at DA Townley & Associates since May 2005. As the only actuarial student working in the pension department, I have been assisting the actuary on various projects. I got a chance to apply my academic knowledge and analytical skills into real life practice. And more important I have a better idea about what an actuary, especially a pension consultant actuary, does on a daily basis. I expect to come back to school in September for my last semester and then start my professional career as a consultant actuary.

Now in the final year of my undergraduate study, I feel very fortunate to soon graduate with an Actuarial Science degree. And thanks to all of the good professors and classmates I met in the Actuarial Science program, I enjoyed my academic journey at SFU very much. I will continue working in the actuarial industry after graduating and hope to achieve my ASA and FSA destinations within the next 2 years.

Statistics and Actuarial Science Endowment Awards

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.

Yi Zhang

Almost three years ago, I made a very important decision in my life and I left Beijing for Vancouver Canada with excitement, expecting to get a better education in a Canadian university.

I started my study at SFU in Jan. 2004. I surprisedly found that there are so many academic programs and courses at SFU for students to choose. However, at the very beginning, I was simply not sure which subject and program I should choose as my major. I liked Mathematics very much in both my junior and senior high school's studies and always got good grades. Therefore, having a rough idea that I should choose a program which is closely related to mathematics but also applicable in our daily life, I selected most of my courses in Math and Statistics.

The first time I heard about Actuarial Science was when a friend of mine showed me the web-site of "be an actuary.org" and the words "career without boundaries" aroused my interest immediately. So I could not help looking into it in more details. The more I searched, the more I felt interested in it. And I finally realized that Actuarial Science was just what I was looking for. However, at first, I felt a little bit hesitated to apply to go into the Actuarial Program, because I had heard that the Actuarial Science Program at SFU is quite good, but very

competitive. Particularly its ACMA courses are very challenging and difficult to learn. But still, my great interest in the subject pushed me forward. So I started to fill out all the required courses of the Actuarial Science program. Even though some of the courses proved to be very difficult and tough, and sometimes even let me feel frustrated, I still strove for further progress and best result as possible.

In the spring semester 2006, luckily enough, I was accepted into Actuarial Major Program with an outstanding GPA. The actuarial science study has proved to be very challenging, fascinating and very fruitful to me. I really enjoy the academic discussions about material and difficult problems in Actuarial courses and Statistics, which I should say benefited me a great deal. Along with my studies, I am getting to have a clearer picture of how it is like to work as an actuary and I have found my interest in this profession increasing day by day.

Of course, I know Actuarial Science is by no means an easy major, it needs great diligence and devotion. And to become a qualified actuary, there is still a long way for me to go. I know I will have to face the increasing difficulty of the course materials and have to overcome a lot of difficulties in my future study and work. However, I firmly believe that as long as I continue to study and work hard, I shall finally reach my goal one day in future.

Department of Statistics & Actuarial Science Awards Reception
4:00 p.m., May 23, 2006, K9509

Undergraduate Awards

Undergraduate Open Scholarships:

Leo Cheng 1057,1061
Raymond Chiang 1054,1057,1061
John Kowalik 1057
Melissa Kristensen 1057,1061
Victoria Laan 1054,1057,1061
Rong Li 1054,1061
Monica Lu 1054,1057,1061
Suli Ma 1054,1057
Eunjoo Park (Julie) 1054
Meng Jie Wang (Rina) 1054,1057,1061
Xiao Wang 1057
Kuan-Chiun Wu (Kyle)1054,1057
Jinhuang Yan 1061
Yi Zhang 1054,1057,1061

SFU Alumni Scholarship

Raymond Chiang 1057,1061
De Hu (Robbin) 1057,1061
Feng Li 1057
Rong Li 1054,1057
Xiao Wang 1057
Yi Zhang 1057,1061

Faculty of Science Alumni Scholarship:

Feng Li 1054

Dean's Undergraduate Studies Convocation Medal:

Natalia Lysenko 1051

Dean of Science Award:

Feng Li 1057

Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship:

Rong Li 1061

Statistics & Actuarial Science Endowment Award for excellent achievement in the Majors & Honors program:

Raymond Chiang
Yi Zhang

SSC Endowment Award:

Meng Jie Wang (Rina)

R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship:

Chun-Kai Liao (Kenny) 1061
Jie Liu 1061

Watson Wyatt Scholarship:

Feng Li 1061

Graduate Awards

NSERC Industrial Postgraduate Scholarship:

Carolyn Huston 1057-1067
Mark Wolters 1057-1067

NSERC PGS M Scholarship:

Kyle Vincent 1067-1074

Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research Senior Graduate Fellowship:

Kelly Burkett
Jean Shin
Eric Sayre

SFU Special Graduate Entrance Scholarship:

Ryan Lekivetz

CONACyT Graduate Scholarship:

Elizabeth Juarez Colunga

CIHR Doctoral Research Award:

Kelly Burkett

C.D. Nelson Memorial Graduate Scholarship:

Kyle Vincent 1067

PhD Graduate Fellowship:

Crystal Linkletter 1057
Kelly Burkett 1061
Pritam Ranjan 1064
Chunfang Lin 1064

MSc Graduate Fellowship:

Matthew Pratola 1057,1064
Shih-Wa Ying (Celes) 1064
Li Xing 1064
Xin Feng (Cindy) 1064