

# 2011

## 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 April Allen Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship for students with high standing in Actuarial Science established by T.A. Townley & Associates to honor the spirit of April Allen.
- 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.
- R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship in Actuarial Science.
- The Statistical Society of Canada (SSC) award.
- The Statistics and Actuarial Science Endowment Awards (three awards) funded by earnings on our departmental endowment fund.

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### April Allen Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship

#### Zurika Chandranath

This scholarship is awarded annually to students within their first year of being admitted into one of the Actuarial Sciences programs who demonstrate excellence in academic performance and exhibit potential for success in the actuarial science field. Preference is given to students who have personally been affected by cancer and/or have demonstrated leadership and/or service to an organization involved in cancer research and care. It was established by D.A. Townley & Associates to honor the spirit of April Allen.

#### Zurika Chandranath writes:

I have completed my second year of undergraduate studies at SFU, including one semester in the Actuarial Science Program. My passion for Mathematics and Statistics was what drew me to this career path and I cannot imagine pursuing any other field of study. I feel very blessed to have been given the opportunity to be a part of this program, and will strive to be an outstanding actuary.

In my opinion, being an actuary is not just about crunching numbers, doing complex calculations and running various analyses. I believe that it's a way of contributing to society and helping a vast number of people. My encounters with cancer patients, disabled persons, injured soldiers have increased my motivation to excel as an actuary and thereby alleviate the burdens

faced by people in such situations.

My first encounter with cancer was when my neighbor was diagnosed with Leukemia. I considered her to be a mother figure and I was filled with grief when she passed away when I was 13 years old. Although I was rather young at the time, I could feel the pain and burden her husband and young children went through. I was even more personally effected when my own grandmother, an integral part of my family, was diagnosed with breast cancer about 3 years ago. When this happened I felt extremely sad and went to visit my grandmother at the hospital as much as I could, and prayed frequently that she would recover. Thankfully, she did, and is doing well now. This experience made me truly understand the value of life and what it is to feel like you're losing a loved one. I was able to then empathize with many people suffering from cancer and their loved ones.

I was able to help my piano teacher's domestic helper, who was also diagnosed with breast cancer, by visiting her regularly and buying her certain food items that she required. One of my best friends' sisters was diagnosed with leukemia, and my mother and I were able to raise some funds, which would help pay for her operations. Unfortunately, she passed away at a very young age. I was able to notice the tremendous amount of stress her parents went through, and the financial and emotional struggles the family had to endure.

My home country, Sri Lanka, had to endure a civil war for 30 years, which only ended in 2009. This war has taken away so many lives and destroyed so many families. I was able to help a family friend with a project to help blind soldiers learn English. It was an honor to help these people who had risked their lives whilst fighting for the country. I was also able to learn of the hardships these soldiers' families have to go through financially, since the soldiers who used to be the breadwinners were now disabled.

I now see how having a good insurance policy in tact would have benefited all the cases above, by giving the families a feeling of stability during tribulations. Of course, there is no way to take back the cancer or what happened to the soldiers, but it would definitely reduce the financial burden and make people less intimidated by the exorbitant medical bills. This is where being an actuary would help, in designing insurance policies to help people such as those mentioned here.

I sincerely thank D.A. Townley & Associates for donating the funds to this scholarship. This has remarkably reduced the financial burden on my parents for funding my tuition, and thus I greatly appreciate it. This award has also given me the drive to succeed further in my studies. I would also wish to thank the professors in the Statistics and Actuarial Science department at SFU, with whose help I know I can make my goals a reality.

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# Watson Wyatt Scholarship

## Tim Tian-Feng Luo

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.

### **Tim Tian-Feng Luo writes:**

It is an honour to receive the Towers Watson Scholarship in Actuarial Science and I would like to thank you for your generosity and support towards my education. I'm currently in my final year at Simon Fraser University, majoring in Actuarial Science with a minor in Business Administration, three successful Co-op work terms, and four preliminary SOA exams under my belt. I am also presently volunteering at SFU Recreation to manage and promote our Intramural sports leagues in support of a healthy student life that balances study with active living.

I decided upon studying actuarial science once I learned that this field rewards well-rounded individuals with both strong analytical and communication abilities, which seemed to fit well with my skill set and career aspirations. Furthermore, the wide range of topics that actuaries need to be proficient in, including finance, statistics, and computer science just to name a few, seemed to point towards a very dynamic career with many growth opportunities.

As many actuarial students will confirm, starting out in this program is often a shock upon realizing the level of hard work required and the impressive academic abilities of one's classmates. At first, I was unsure of whether I would be successful in such a program; however, I was happy to find that my interest in the field grew considerably as I delved further into the curriculum. As an added bonus, changes to my study habits resulted in increasingly better performances throughout my actuarial courses.

In summary, I am thankful for choosing the Actuarial Science field as the last few years have really helped to push my limits and grow as a student, and I look forward to the challenges that this field will surely provide me in the future.

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## **Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship**

### **Jordan Richard**

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.

#### **Jordan Richard writes:**

I am honoured to be the recipient of the Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship in Actuarial Science. This award will certainly increase the flexibility that I have in continuing my pursuit of a career as a qualified actuary, and for that I am very grateful.

I am currently completing my fourth term in actuarial science at Simon Fraser University, hoping to enter the workforce as soon as possible. After receiving a B.Sc. in Mathematics and Commerce, I was drawn to pursue a career as an actuary based on the challenging level of work, the broad knowledge base required, and the constant evolution of the profession. So far, my studies have lived up to my expectations, and I am more than happy to be constantly challenged. I feel as though I am at the beginning of a lifetime of learning.

At this point I have yet to narrow down my options for which field within the actuarial sector to pursue as a career. Ideally I would love to gain exposure to all of the different kinds of work that actuaries are involved in, eventually choosing the position which would allow me to have the greatest impact on the largest number of people.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support of my professors, classmates, and the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science at SFU. Without people who share the same goals, experiences, and education, it would be awfully difficult to pursue something as demanding as the professional actuarial exams.

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## **R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship**

### **Isabelle Yi Jung – Yejun (Raymond) Song**

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.

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# Statistical Society of Canada

## Yifan Xu

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.

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### **Yifan Xu writes:**

Mathematics is the genetic strength of my family. I have taken lots of mathematics and statistics courses, such as Calculus, Numerical Analysis, Mathematical Analysis, Differential Equations, Bayesian Analysis, Statistical Theory and so on. I find it much easier to study and work in the Actuarial field with the more mathematics and statistics skills I learn.

Meanwhile, I worked really hard as a teaching assistant for the last year. Through helping students, I not only improved my communication skills, but also learned how to organize my study time and work time efficiently. I believe that this has also helped me attain an even higher GPA than before.

All my hard work has paid off. I have successfully passed SOA exams P, FM, MLC and C with remarkable grades. I also did a Co-op at The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) for a 4-month term. The real life actuarial projects are much more complicated than the school projects. However, all the technical and practical skills I have learned from school are applicable in this industry.

Upon the completion of my degree and this Co-op work, I look forward to working for an insurance company, focusing on P&C insurance. I am confident that I will become a great actuary.

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

### **Mandeep Bariah – Jeffrey Ting – Xiao Ting (Sunny) Wang**

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

#### **Mandeep Bariah writes:**

I am pursuing a second degree in Actuarial Science at SFU. My first degree is a Bachelor in Commerce from Delhi University, India. Along with my first degree I took exams for Chartered Accountancy and cleared two of its three stages.

Numbers always intrigued and inspired me, however, after completing the second stage of the Chartered Accountancy, I realized that it was not my true calling. I was grappling with multiple scenarios regarding what field to pursue and fortunately got an opportunity to visit Canada. While in Canada I got my first glimpse into the study of Actuarial Science and decided to pursue it. Being an international student, I had no clue about university life in Canada, so I was excited and nervous at the same time. The whole education system was new to me, but thanks to Dr. Gary Parker's help I settled in with ease.

I feel enthralled after joining the Actuarial Science program at SFU. From the ACMA courses that I have taken so far, I know that this field is for me and hope to build a strong career in it. I passed Exam P in May 2011 and plan to take another exam before the end of 2011.

I would like to thank all my professors for sharing their knowledge and my friends and classmates for their help and support because it is their undeterred support and wishes that have helped me come so far. I believe that I will meet many more interesting friends and guides as my education continues.

## **Jeffrey Ting writes:**

Growing up in Canada, I have always had a passion for sports. Though unsure of when I became aware of how statistics are tracked in sports, I have for a long time appreciated their purpose. Unlike other professions where performance cannot be tracked to such detail, statistics are kept with the purpose of being able to differentiate one player/team to the next. It simply sounds odd for someone to say, for example, that one university professor is without a doubt a better teacher than another. This simply is not the case in sports where judgments are made regularly to “rank” players/teams.

In high school, I began tracking basketball statistics, trying to get them to reveal a story that eyes simply cannot tell. This continues to this day as I pursue my second degree at SFU in Statistics where hopefully I will continue with my Masters, also in Statistics.

Outside of school, I have always tried to stay involved in sports. Right after high school, I spent a couple of summers interning for a sports agent in Edmonton while, during the year at the University of Toronto, I spent time working for the local Ontario Hockey League team. After graduating, I moved back to Vancouver where I spent a year coaching basketball before deciding to go back to school, this time with a focus on statistics. I am currently working part time with the Athletics Department at SFU tracking statistics for the varsity basketball and football teams while spending the rest of my time learning of new ways to analyze and interpret statistics.

**Department of Statistics & Actuarial Science Awards/Graduands Reception**  
**12:00 p.m., June 15, 2011, K9509**

**Undergraduate Awards**

**Undergraduate Open Scholarships:**

Zurika Chandranath 1111  
Changwu Chen 1104, 1107, 1111  
Yongtao Chen 1107, 1111  
Gabriel Goh 1104, 1107  
Best Guo 1104, 1107, 1111  
Shi Jin 1104, 1107  
Eric Kang 1104, 1107  
Jiayang Li 1104, 1107  
Xi Li 1104  
Xinying Liang 1104, 1107, 1111  
Yunbo Lu 1111  
Tim Tian-Feng Luo 1111  
Yejun (Raymond) Song 1104  
Yifan (Mike) Xu 1104, 1107  
Yuchen Zhang 1107  
Wei Zhao 1107

**Alumni Scholarship & Bursary Endowment**

**Fund:**

Jeffrey Ting 1107

**International Mobility Award:**

Carrie Peng 1111

**Recreation Leadership Award:**

Tim Tian-Feng Luo 1111

**International Co-operative Education Award:**

Joyce Chan 1111  
Ran Cheng 1111  
Amy McConnell 1104

**Dean of Science Award**

Phillip Jang 1107

**Louise Berthe Samson Undergraduate Award:**

Amy McConnell 1104

**April Allen Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship:**

Zurika Chandranath

**R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship:**

Yejun (Raymond) Song  
Isabelle Yi Jung

**Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship:**

Jordan Richard

**SSC Endowment Award:**

Yifan (Mike) Xu

**Statistics & Actuarial Science Endowment Award:**

Mandeep Bariah  
Jeffrey Ting  
Xiaoting (Sunny) Wang

**Watson Wyatt Scholarship in Actuarial Science:**

Tim Tian-Feng Luo





## Graduate Awards

**C.D. Nelson Memorial Graduate Scholarship:**

Olga Strizhkova 1097, 1101, 1104

**Pacific Century Graduate Scholarship:**

Oksana Chkrebti 1107, 1111

Maria Lorenzi 1097, 1101

Henry Yuen 1107, 1111

**Provost Prize of Distinction:**

Oksana Chkrebti 1107-1134

Ruth Joy 1107-1134

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

Kyle Vincent 1111

Darby Thompson 1114

**Special Graduate Entrance Scholarship:**

Andrew Henrey 1107

**Randy Sitter Annual Graduate Scholarship in  
Statistics & Actuarial Science:**

Harsha Perera 1114

**NSERC PGS D:**

Kyle Vincent 1107-1124

**NSERC CGS M Scholarship:**

Jimmy Poon 1111, 1114, 1117

**MSc Graduate Fellowship:**

Alisha Albert-Green 1104, 1114

Jing Cai 1114

Harlan Campbell 1104

Yingying Chen 1114

Andrew Henrey 1114

Myoung Ho Li 1114

Jie Liu 1114

Junjie Liu 1114

Harsha Perera 1114

Yu Xia (Lilian) 1114

Meng Yu 1114

Henry Yuen 1114

Hua Zheng 1114

**PhD Graduate Fellowship:**

Cindy Feng 1104, 1114

Joslin Goh 1114

Shirin Golchi 1111, 1114

Elizabeth Juarez 1104

Ryan Lekivetz 1104, 1114

Maria Lorenzi 1104

Jean Shin 1114

Zheng Sun 1114

Kyle Vincent 1104

## Faculty Awards

**SSC Award for the Impact of Applied and  
Collaborative Work:**

Rick Routledge

**Elected Fellow of American Association for  
the Advancement of Science:**

Charmaine Dean

## Department Awards

SFU Actuarial Science recognized as Centre of Actuarial Excellence by Society of Actuaries

