

2017

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/people/awards.html>

The Department has 5 major awards:

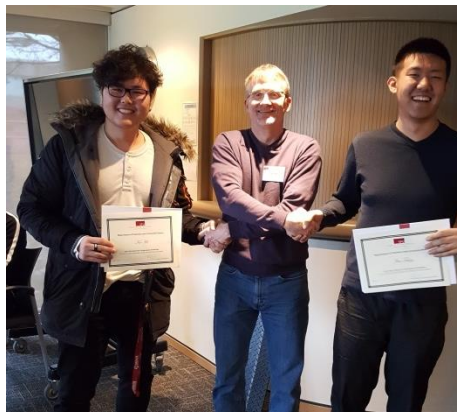
- The April Allen Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship for students with high standing in Actuarial Science established by T.A. Townley & Associates to honor the spirit of April Allen.
- The Towers Watson Scholarship for students with high standing in Actuarial Science established by the Towers Watson Company.
- The Pacific Blue Cross Scholarship for students with high standing in Actuarial Science established by Pacific Blue Cross.
- Aon R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship in Actuarial Science.
- The Statistics and Actuarial Science Endowment Awards funded by earnings on our departmental endowment fund.



April Allen Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship

Ke He – Jin Tang

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.

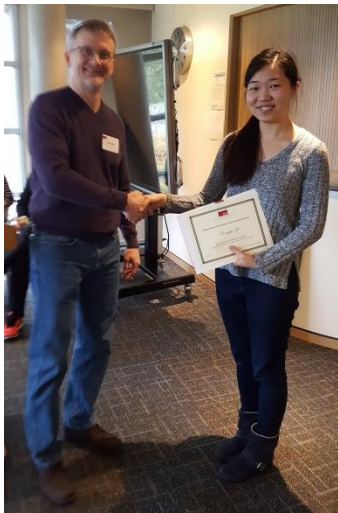


Aon R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship

Hongshi (Jenny) Li – Frank Siu

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.

Hongshi (Jenny) Li writes:



I was very happy to learn that I was a recipient of Aon R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship. I wish to express my thanks to Aon for their generosity. The financial support will go towards my higher education.

I am a fourth year Actuarial Science student who wants to become an actuary in the future. To realize my career goal, I study hard and maintain my CGPA around 4. In addition to my academic achievements, I try to gain various experiences outside of classrooms. I have successfully completed several co-op terms in financial and insurance industries, which allowed me to learn how to work in real companies.

So far, I have completed five preliminary SOA exams, and I am going to complete FAP by next year. I think I have already found the field that I want to devote myself to. I like what actuaries do, and I want to be an actuary.

The Aon R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship will allow me to concentrate on my education. Their financial generosity brings me one step closer to my goal and inspires me to help others by giving back to the community. I hope one day I will be able to help other students achieve their goals just as they have helped me.

Frank Siu writes:

I am honoured to be receiving this award because it represents the department recognizing my achievements.

I decided to pursue actuarial science during my senior year of high school. When I was young I knew I wanted to do something that involved business and mathematics, so I figured that I would be going for the typical business finance route. However, after doing some research I came across actuarial science and noticed that it was offered at SFU.

As cliché as it sounds, this program changed my perspective on life. Usually people talk about the ‘jump’ in difficulty from high school to university, but for students in the Actuarial Science program, the real jump is taking that first course - ACMA 210. The best part is, if you survive that course, there is an even bigger jump waiting for you shortly after...ACMA 320. On top of technical ability, we also learned that it takes a back seat in importance when compared to ‘street’ smarts, which goes to show how well-rounded one must be to be successful in this field – it isn’t enough to just be good at math. Reminiscing back to those rough days with my peers always puts a smile on our faces because it makes us realize how far we had to push ourselves. Since starting the program, I have passed four actuarial exams: P/1, FM/2, MFE/3F, and C4 (these will probably be called something different if you are reading this in the future) and completed several co-op work terms.

This scholarship will be used for my tuition. I would like to express my gratitude towards the Aon R. Bruce Coles Memorial for their generosity.

Towers Watson Scholarship

Nathan Esau

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.

Nathan Esau Writes:



I am very thankful for being awarded the Towers Watson scholarship. As an actuarial science student, I have had the opportunity to meet Towers Watson employees at several info sessions and they are a professional and friendly group of people.

When I started university, I did not know what I wanted to study. I remember going to huge lecture halls with hundreds of people and having a hard time getting to know other classmates. Getting admitted into the actuarial science program, which is comprised of a small number of strong academic students helped me to improve as a student. Every semester since I have been in the program I’ve improved my GPA, and my courses gave me the knowledge I needed to pass all five SOA preliminary exams. I have also made many friends in the program, who I will stay in contact with after graduation.

I am also grateful to have been part of the Science co-op program. Through co-op, I got to live for four months in Ottawa working at Statistics Canada and eight months in Toronto at GGY. Getting to see different parts of Canada and gain valuable work experience made the co-op program well worth my time. I have secured a full-time position at GGY upon graduation, and will be helping their team to develop the software which life insurance companies depend on to perform their financial calculations.

I highly recommend future students to get involved in the department as this has helped lead to my continued success. Some events I have participated in include the 2016 ASNA competition in Niagara Falls and the 2016 Munich Re Cup competition in Toronto. These competitions were a great way to meet actuarial students from other schools and get an idea of the type of work actuaries do in the industry.

Finally, I am thankful to the Award Committee for selecting me for this award and to the sponsor Towers Watson. I look forward to the next step in my journey to becoming an actuary.

Statistics and Actuarial Science Endowment Awards

Award to Recognize the Statistical Society of Canada

Christopher Kevin



This award is offered to an undergraduate student who is a declared major/honors in Statistics and/or Actuarial Science and who is promoting Statistics and Probability. The criteria for selection for the award are academic merit and a commitment to the mission of the Statistical Society of Canada (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.

Academic Merit Award

**Ebrahim Adeeb – Sihan Cheng – Richard Groenewald – Nikola Surjanovic –
Philippa Swartz – Zhen (Jenny) Wu**

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.



Sihan Cheng Writes:

I am an international student from China. I got my first degree in China as a Bachelor of Aquaculture Science. After I graduated, I found that it was not the life I wanted to pursue. With my mother's encouragement and support, I decided to go back to campus and learn knowledge more applicable to the society. Fortunately, I received admission to the Beedie school of Business at SFU as a second degree student in Fall 2015.

When I learned about the actuary profession from the internet, I knew immediately that it was the dream career I was looking for. It is challengeable and intelligent. My outstanding ability in math gave me confidence to apply for the actuarial science program. So I started to complete the required courses. Even though some of the courses introduced were tough, like Acma210, I was still one of the top students in the class as well as in other Statistics and Business courses. At the same time, I also passed SOA P exam before I took Acma210 and Stat285. In Spring 2017, I was accepted into the Actuarial Science Major Program with an outstanding GPA.

In my future studies, I will keep working hard to maintain a high GPA. I also plan to take the exam FM and MLC this year, and finish the ASA tests before I graduate. Meanwhile, I am actively applying for my first Co-op this semester since I have learned from Dr. Cary and Professor Barbara that practice is the core method to absorb knowledge from books completely. I believe I can be a professional actuary in the future.

Richard Groenewald Writes:

While I have consistently been interested in the field of mathematics, I did not know which area of application of the subject would pique my curiosity until the beginning of my second year here at SFU. At the time, I had just declared in the economics program, but I thoroughly enjoyed the stronger mathematical emphasis and more broad applicability of the topics covered in the introductory statistics classes, 270 and 285. It was for this reason that I decided to transfer into the statistics honours program, while minoring in economics and in math.

I am certainly very happy with that decision, as I have found the program to be a nice blend of theoretical and applied topics that presents a rewarding challenge. Because of this, I hope to continue my studies in statistics and in mathematics at the graduate level. I would like to thank all those in the department who make these awards and various other opportunities possible, as they complement an excellent learning environment.

Nikola Surjanovic Writes:

The thought of studying statistics first came across my mind after a conversation with my older sister Sonja, who was an SFU statistics undergraduate student at the time. I was in my second year of high school, and my previous picture of “statistics” was that it involved drawing bar charts. Thankfully, my sister corrected this misconception and explained to me that the study of statistics went far beyond the idea of drawing and analyzing graphs, and was a science of its own which could be applied to almost any discipline. I later heard the words of John Tukey that “the best thing about being a statistician is that you get to play in everyone's backyard.” At that point, I started to become quite attracted to the study of the subject, but I was still unsure as to whether I should study statistics or engineering.

Only a short time before starting to apply for university during high school did I firmly decide that I wanted to pursue statistics. I always had a passion for mathematics and problem-solving, and I felt that studying statistics could interest me in this way. At the same time, a sort of hunch told me to pursue statistics; I am now in my second year of studies, and I do not at all regret my decision. I feel that statistics offers a beautiful blend of theory and application. The mathematical side of me enjoys the problem-solving and theoretical aspect of statistics. At the same time, my eagerness to apply my knowledge in the world around me was also satisfied when I started to realize which kinds of problems the professors in our department and experts in the field are currently working on and solving.

In my first year of university I joined SASSA (the Statistics and Actuarial Science Student Association) where I met many people who shared two things in common with me: they liked to talk about mathematics, and they enjoyed the concept of free food. Needless to say, many of us became quite close friends. From the start of university, I also found many professors offering their guidance and advice, and the secretaries were also quick to lend a helping hand; the atmosphere of the department was great from the beginning, and my appreciation for the people who were part of it quickly grew.

Outside of school, I enjoy playing tennis and running. I was also involved as a volunteer math peer tutor in the Fall 2016 semester, where I helped students enrolled in first-year calculus courses, which I enjoyed very much.

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.

Zhen (Jenny) Wu Writes:

The first time I heard the word "actuarial science" was before I came to Canada. According to the description from a friend of my relatives who happened to be a junior actuary, it seems to me that actuaries are all high intelligent people and it is a job with a promising career outlook. "Am I going to study actuarial science at college?" "En... I don't know."

The second time I heard about it was from my instructor in Columbia College where I finished my high school and university transfer program. He recommended, several times, for me to consider pursuing a major in SFU's actuarial science program. Later, he invited me to attend the Vancouver Actuaries Night event downtown where more than half of actuaries around the Vancouver mainland gathered. It was an eye-opening experience to me and made me think "being an actuary is a cool job".

The third time I was related to actuarial science, I was already in my ACMA 210 class and worked really hard to outperform to be admitted to the program. This time, I do feel the fun side of this challenging work.

Yes, it is tough to get a good grade in actuarial science, and yes, it is very time consuming. Working on actuarial science would cost us more spare time than others. However, the great sense of accomplishment and satisfaction after resolving a complicated problem or passing an exam could bring us is incomparable. I enjoy the motivation and life learning experience which actuarial science brought to my life, and I feel extremely grateful that there are countless amazing staff and students who are willing to help me with all kindness during my studies in Canada. Last but not least, I would send my gratitude to my parents who are always there supporting me no matter what.

Statistics & Actuarial Science Departmental Gathering
April 7, 2017 – 12:30pm – Halpern Centre 114

Undergraduate Awards

Undergraduate Open Scholarship:

Tsz Kwan Chan 1164
Kin Ching Lydia Chau 1171
Anqi Chen 1164,1167,1171
Jingxue Feng 1164
Richard Groenewald 1164,1167,1171
Yi Jia Gu 1167,1171
Yunqing He 1167
Stephen Kane 1171
Hongshi Li 1167,1171
Qi Li 1164
Chuyuan Lin 1171
Rachel Loo 1167,1171
Atul Sriram 1171
Jin Tang 1171
Matthew Tang 1171
Yuan Tian 1167
Jessica Tse 1167,1171
Mandeep Uppal 1164,1171
Jing Wang 1164
Peiwei Wang 1171
Xinmiao Wang 1164
Yifan Wu 1171
Xuefei Yang 1167
Dian Yu 1164
Yingying Zheng 1164

SFU Alumni Scholarship:

King Ching Lydia Chau 1171
Anqi Chen 1167,1171
Richard Groenewald 1167
Abi Richard Satyadenny 1167,1171
Jin Tang 1171

Faculty of Science Alumni Scholarship:

Richard Groenewald 1164

International Co-operative Education Award:

Patience Manhanga 1171
Larry Sit 1167,1171
Yirong You 1167
Yuwei Zhang 1164

Tadeusz Specht Memorial Scholarship:

Rya Lin Jian 1167,1171

William & Amelia McMahan Scholarship:

Richard Groenewald 1171

Gordon M Shrum Entrance Scholarship:

Albert Kho 1167

Simon Fraser Entrance Scholarship:

Nikola Surjanovic 1167,1171

International Summit Entrance Scholarship:

Kin Ching Lydia Chau 1167
Zhen Wu 1164,1171

International Academic Excellence Entrance Scholarship:

Junyu Lin 1167,1171

BC Academic Excellence Entrance Scholarship:

James Braun 1167

Ken Caple College Entrance Scholarship:

Kristy Chiu 1171
Yi Jia Gu 1164

Dean's Academic Excellence Entrance Scholarship:

Atul Sriram 1164,1167

William Hamilton Transfer Entrance Scholarship:

Carl Louw 1167,1171

April Allen Memorial Scholarship:

Ke He 1171
Jin Tang 1171

Aon R. Bruce Coles Memorial Scholarship in Actuarial Science:

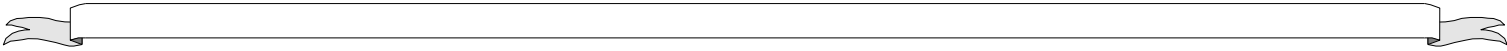
Hongshi (Jenny) Li 1171
Frank Siu 1171

Towers Watson Scholarship in Actuarial Science:

Nathan Esau 1171

Statistics & Actuarial Science Endowment Award:

Christopher Kevin – (SSC) 1171
Ebrahim Adeeb 1171
Sihan Cheng 1171
Richard Groenewald 1171
Nikola Surjanovic 1171
Philippa Swartz 1171
Zhen (Jenny) Wu 1171



Graduate Awards

Special Graduate Entrance Scholarship:

Nate Sandholtz 1167

Provost Prize of Distinction:

William Ruth 1167-1204
Nate Sandholtz 1167-1204

Graduate Dean Entrance Scholarship:

William Ruth 1197-1204
Nate Sandholtz 1167-1204

NSERC CGS Masters Scholarship:

Trevor Thomson 1164-1171

NSERC PGS Doctoral Scholarship:

Yunlong (Ben) Nie 1164-1191
William Ruth 1167-1194

Business & Entrepreneurship Scholarship:

Jennifer Parkhouse 1167

Faculty of Science Excellence in Teaching Award:

Peijun (Perry) Sang

Randy Sitter Annual Graduate Scholarship in Statistics & Actuarial Science:

Yunlong (Ben) Nie 1171

Dr. David Eaves Graduate Scholarship in Statistics:

Matthew van Bommel 1171

Faculty Awards

Elected Fellow of the Society of Actuaries:

Jean-François Bégin

CANSSI Collaborative Research Team Award:

Joan Hu

BC Sugar Achievement Award:

Richard Lockhart

Awarded NSERC Engage Grant:

Luke Bornn

