

## **2007-2008 Statistics & Actuarial Science Endowment Award**

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

### **Phillip Jang**

Ever since I was young, I've had a fascination with numbers, and a strong obsession with scoring high. I was always a step ahead of my peers when it came to virtually anything in school, as I enjoyed the satisfaction of conquering challenges, competition, and of reaching that 100%. Although math was the pinnacle of my abilities, I did not know what kind of job I could find doing math, and was thinking of going into either the natural sciences, which I also excelled at and found fascinating; or business, which I found neither interesting nor challenging, but did provide good jobs.

My first exposure to actuarial science came from my high school counselor who told me of a hot job on the market involving lots of math. At that time I still thought I would be going to UBC to take physics or chemistry, or going into accounting since I was "good with numbers," but the more I learned about actuarial science, the more it caught my eye. Thanks to my high school's career preparation program, and to Westcoast Actuaries Inc. who were kind enough to give me a preview of what actuaries do, I was convinced that actuarial science was the way to go.

After taking my first few courses in actuarial mathematics, I can say with assurance that this is the correct program for me. I took ACMA 210 in the fall of 2007, I was shocked to see how scientific this field is, using every mathematical tool we've learned from the quadratic formula and geometric series to Newton's Method and Taylor series. The following semester, I took ACMA 320, which was far harder than any course I've ever taken, where even A students were failing midterms in that class. I have never been so challenged by a math course before, but also never so inspired.

I would like to give thanks to my family and friends for all their support, the Statistics and Actuarial Science Department for all their help, and to my professors for passing on their knowledge and for caring for their students. I've learned so much in the actuarial science program, and met so many great people. There are still many more challenges that await me, and my drive to take them on has never been stronger. Bring it on!