

MTSU Actuarial Sciences Program Newsletter
December 15, 2007

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1. Opening Remarks at the State Farm Scholarship Award Ceremony by Dr. Hong

It is my great pleasure today that we are able to gather here in order to honor our outstanding students and alumni of the Actuarial Science (ACSI) program. On behalf of the ACSI faculty and students, I truly appreciate Mr. Nichols from State Farm Insurance and the MTSU president, Dr. Sidney McPhee for presenting today and giving their great support to the MTSU actuarial science program, a unique program in Tennessee.

Actuarial science is a special discipline in training students to apply mathematical skills and statistical techniques to manage risks and solve problems in insurance and pension programs. A career as an Actuary is better described as a "business" career with a mathematical basis rather than as a "technical" mathematical career. The professional societies of actuaries have a sequence of exams. The occupation of actuary has been ranked as one of the best jobs based on a variety of factors for many years. Actuaries are indeed well paid. According to our own ACSI graduates last May, the average number for the starting salary with a Bachelor's degree and at least one professional exam was about \$53K. Students in the ACSI program usually receive internships from Insurance companies in the summer and/or regular semesters.

The MTSU ACSI program was founded over 20 years ago. Dr. J.C. Hankins, an emeritus professor, was the founder and the director of the ACSI program. This is a unique program in Tennessee as the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, the University of Memphis, and even Vanderbilt University have no such program. Currently, there are over thirty undergraduate and seven graduate students in the program. Not including the alumni, the AMSA has fifty four student members. Among the ACSI students sitting in this room today, we have Jason Wix from Western Kentucky University, Tiffany Hunt from UTK, Shannon Snow from Mississippi, Adam Niblett from Alabama, Rog Heller from Nebraska, Armin Orucevic from Maine, Linda Chang and Qi Lu from China, as well as Kazem Karimi from Iran. Many students come from out of state or from abroad to MTSU, just for the ACSI program.

The actuarial math student association (AMSA) was established in 2005. In the past two years, AMSA has hosted over a dozen professional speakers for student activities. Various ACSI students have passed actuarial professional exams more than ten times. Recent ACSI graduates have been hired as actuaries in CIGNA, Consumers Insurance, BCBS, Humana, Willis, as well as in WellPoint. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate our AMSA members, Kazem Karimi, Samir Saad, and Jeremy Richardson for receiving actuary job offers very recently from Blue Cross and Blue Shield at Chattanooga-TN, AIG, and CIGNA, respectively. The job market demand for ACSI professionals is still strong, as well as the desire of continuing study in the ACSI program from graduates of other schools. In the past year, I have received over twenty email messages for the possibility to study in the ACSI graduate program at MTSU. I think the ACSI study will fit in the Professional Science MS degree Program just perfectly.

Our ACSI students and faculty greatly appreciate State Farm Insurance for setting up its Scholarship for the Excellence in ACSI. The grant support from the Casualty Actuaries of Southeast (CASE) also provides strong support to the MTSU ACSI program.

I'd like to express my gratefulness to our ACSI Alumni for their support. Both Mandy Lee and John Daniel have given talks to our ACSI students. I'd also like to thank our ACSI students for their hard work on their course study as well as on their professional exam preparations. We had one student last semester who passed three exams from the Society of Actuaries before her graduation with a bachelor degree. She set a new record at MTSU and we all feel proud of her achievement since it is seldom for an undergraduate student to pass three exams even at a top ranked university. Last but not the least, I'd like to thank our ACSI Faculty not only for their professional working attitude, but also for their passion on the ACSI program and their additional efforts to help students in exam preparations. I am certain that under the support of MTSU administration, the ACSI program will be one of the best programs in the country in the near future.

2. Scholarship Recipients

- Recipients of State Farm Scholarship for the Excellence in Actuarial Science: **Dustin Gray, Wesley Merriman, Jeremy Richardson, and Benvictor Sang**
- Casualty Actuaries of Southeast (CASE) Grant for MTSU ACSI Program Scholarship Recipients: **Linda Chang, Rog Heller, Adam Niblett, and Jason Wix**

3. Outstanding MTSU ACSI Student, Alumni, Faculty Award

- Outstanding ACSI Graduate Student Award Recipient: **Kazem Karimi**
- Outstanding AMSA Leadership Award Recipient: **William Chance Phelps**
- Outstanding MTSU ACSI Alumni Award Recipients: **Lori Badgett, John Daniel, Mandy Lee, and Kevin Smith**
- Outstanding ACSI Faculty Award Recipient: **Dr. J.C. Hankins**

For detailed and photo information, please visit the website:

<http://www.mtsu.edu/~amsa/Calendar.htm>

<http://www.mtsu.edu/~amsa/07ScholarshipPhoto.htm>

4. News from Actuarial Sciences Program and Actuarial Alumni

(1) On October 24, 2007, Ms. **Vickie M. Evans**, Human Resources Director, BPS&M, A Wells Fargo Company, gave a presentation to our actuarial students.

(2) On November 19, 2007, AMSA held a ceremony for ACSI Scholarship Awards and Outstanding Alumni Honoring. Dr. Sidney A. McPhee, the president of MTSU and Mr. Ron Nichols, Vice President of Operations from State Farm Insurance presented and gave encouraging words to ACSI students and faculty.

(3) Mr. Kazem Karimi finished his internship at Blue Cross/Blue Shield of TN and received a job offer as an entry level actuary at BCBSTN.

(4) Mr. Rog Heller passed SOA Exam-FM and received an actuary job offer from a company at Omaha, Nebraska.

(5) Mr. Andy Hill, an ACSI student graduated in May 2007 with an MS degree in mathematics, received a job offer in September 2007 from Humana as an underwriter at Sugar Land (Southwest of Houston).

(6) Mr. Jeremy Richardson, received a job offer from CIGNA at Franklin, TN in November 2007.

(7) **Anna Mu**, a former student of Dr. Hong, passed all CAS exams and received her fellowship certificate (FCAS) from the Casualty Actuaries Society in 2007. Also, **Ms. Mu Xiong**, another former student of Dr. Hong, finished SOA exams and became an ASA, associate member of the Society of Actuaries in 2007.

(8) Dipti Patel passed both parts of the exam-M (MLC and MFE) from the Society of Actuaries in May 2007. She started her work for CIGNA at Connecticut in August. Dipti is also a recruiting committee member at CIGNA. If you are interested in a position at CIGNA, you can send her your resume for consideration: Dipti.Patel2@CIGNA.COM.

(9) Mr. Samir Saad, an instructor of mathematics and a member of AMSA, passed the Exam-MLC in May 2007 and received an actuary job offer from the American General Life & Accident, An AIG Company.

(10) ACSI Students Graduated in December 2007

Congratulations to the following ACSI students who graduated in December, 2007 from MTSU:

Matt Beech, Martin Griewahn, Jeremy Richardson, and Benvictor Sang.

The AMSA will present them an MTSU Alumni Mug.

5. AMSA Activities in the Spring Semester

- January 28, 2008, ACSI Alumni Visit and 1st Meeting of the Semester.
- February 20, 2008, Mr. Mark Bracher, MAAA, FSA, Senior Manager, Trend Actuary of Blue Cross/Blue Shield of TN will speak to ACSI students.
- March 2008, Michael S. Johnson, ASA, from AIG American General will talk to ACSI students.

More activities of AMSA can be found at www.mtsu.edu/~amsa/Calendar.htm.

6. Actuarial Student Foundation

The Actuarial Student Foundation is restricted to support actuarial students in their actuarial career development. If you would like to make a contribution to this foundation, please make your check or money order payable to:

Actuarial Students Foundation, Box 34, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN 37132.

Be sure to send in your contribution before the end of this year to receive tax deductible statement from MTSU Foundations Office. Please also check with your company about the matching contributions.

7. Contact Information

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