

Agenda for ACSI Scholarship Awards and Outstanding Alumni Honoring Ceremony on 11/19/2007

1. Opening Remarks, Dr. Hong
2. State Farm Scholarship of Excellence in ACSI, President McPhee and Mr. Ron Nichols
Recipients: Dustin Gray, Wesley Merriman, Jeremy Richardson, and Benvictor Sang
3. CASE Grant for MTSU ACSI Program Scholarship, President McPhee and Dr. Thomas Cheatham, Dean of CBAS
Recipients: Rog Heller, Linda Chang, Adam Niblett, and Jason Wix
4. Outstanding ACSI Alumni Award, Dr. Church and Dr. J.C. Hankins
Recipient: John Daniel (FCAS 2004), L. Kevin Smith (ACAS 1995), Mandy Lee Bratten (ASA 2007), Yongmei Lori Badgett (ASA 2007)
5. Outstanding ACSI Faculty Award, Dr. Hong and Mr. Beech
Recipient: J.C. Hankins
6. Outstanding Graduate Student Award, Dr. Quinn and Mr. Beech
Recipient: Kazem Karimi
7. Encouraging Words by Mr. Nichols, President McPhee, and Dean Cheatham
8. Close Remarks by Mr. Beech, president of AMSA
9. Group Pictures

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Opening Remarks by Dr. Hong

Dear Mr. Nichols, President McPhee, Dean Cheatham, ACSI Alumni, Faculty, guests and students,

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 currently. 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, AIG-Brentwood, and CIGNA at Franklin, 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.

Again, thank you, Dr. McPhee, Mr. Nichols, Dr. Cheatham, Dr. Hollman, ACSI Alumni, Faculty and Students, for all of your support to this professional program of Actuarial Science.