



GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

10TH ANNUAL AWARDS

Award Winners Booklet

April 13, 2022

A Message from Dr. Debby Burshtyn
Dean, College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

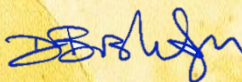
This year marks the GSA's 10th annual awards event – every year graduate stakeholders from across the University of Saskatchewan look forward to this great opportunity to recognize and celebrate the successes of our students and outstanding members of our graduate community.

While you are gaining new and advanced credentials, your research, interests, passion, and dedication in your academic journey leading to new understandings and solutions to problems through innovation, push us all to examine what we can each contribute to solving tomorrow's problems.

By drawing attention to and celebrating excellence in research, leadership and professional and community service, the GSA underscores values that are important to graduate students and our community. Graduate school changes everything – paving a path to a successful future and linking us together as students, educators, community leaders, humanitarians, and a community.

While the Awards Night is to celebrate the award recipients, I would be remiss not to applaud the GSA leaders. The GSA continues to be diligent and steadfast in their commitment to supporting and advocating for all graduate students.

Congratulations to the 2021-2022 award recipients! You are responding to what the world needs. Continue to be bold and ambitious.



Debby Burshtyn, PhD
Dean, College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
University of Saskatchewan

A Message from Rifat Zahan President, Graduate Students' Association

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) would like to congratulate all the award winners on their achievements in the GSA Annual Awards, 3MT Competition, and Sustainability Photo-Voice Contest. This is a great event to recognize our students and faculty members' contribution to world-class research, teaching, student advising, leadership, and community service.

The GSA is honoured to recognize the recipients of this year's award winners. Such an opportunity inspires us and makes us proud of our university community.

We want to extend our gratitude to the University's senior leaders, faculty members, staff members, and local, provincial, and federal governments for their contribution to the graduate-level studies at the University of Saskatchewan.

We are incredibly grateful to our graduate students, council members, standing committee members, and sponsors for cooperating with the GSA to organize the Annual Awards, 3MT Competition, and Sustainability Photo-Voice Contest.

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, we have organized this Awards Ceremony in a limited capacity, following the health regulations and guidelines set out by the Government of Saskatchewan and the University. Next year, we hope to organize the Annual Awards Gala in a larger capacity.

Again, congratulations to all the award winners. We wish you bigger and better things as you continue your journey towards achieving your dreams.

Rifat Zahan

Rifat Zahan

**President, Graduate Students' Association
University of Saskatchewan**

Advising Excellence Award

Dr. Jane Alcorn

The 2022 Graduate Students' Association Advising Excellence Award is presented to Dr. Jane Alcorn for her excellent supervisory and mentoring skills as well as her exceptional support for her advisees' ideas, scholarly work, and financial needs. Dr. Alcorn embodies the capacity to stimulate graduate students to think critically and creatively, while enhancing their graduate student learning experience.



Dr. Jane Alcorn is a Professor and Dean of the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition. She holds a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Pharmaceutical Sciences from the University of Kentucky. She is a member of USask's multidisciplinary Drug Discovery and Development Research Group and the Cannabinoid Research Initiative of Saskatchewan. Dr. Alcorn's research program spans both basic science and human clinical drug discovery offering strong training experiences in translational science. She prioritizes her students' research experiences and provides them with notable attention and support. Dr. Alcorn encourages her students to publish and to present their work at major conferences and to apply for scholarships and awards. By encouraging and assisting in these activities, Dr. Alcorn strives to prepare her students for successful lives and careers.

Excellence in Community Service Award

Mahesh Rachamalla

The 2022 Graduate Students' Association Excellence in Community Service Award is presented to Mahesh Rachamalla to honour his significant impacts and positive contributions to the local community in Saskatchewan and beyond. Mahesh has shown extensive initiative and significant achievements in serving the community in addition to excelling in his academic studies. He has contributed a minimum of seventy-five (75) hours of volunteer work from May 1, 2021 – March 1, 2022.



Mahesh Rachamalla is currently a PhD student in the Department of Biology at the University of Saskatchewan. He was born and raised in a small village in India, where the whole village was one big family. He loves to volunteer in the community and make an impact on people's lives. Over the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic made students' lives difficult due to various restrictions and lack of a social life. He took up the challenge to try and make Indian students' lives better by connecting with local businesses and community organizations to encourage their support for students. For the last two years, he has served as Vice-President Academic Affairs for the India Student's Association (ISA). He took the initiative to help current and incoming students from India and other countries, including Iran and China, to settle during their initial days in Saskatoon during the pandemic. He helped distribute groceries to students who came from India for the first time and who needed help during their initial few days. He has been instrumental in providing free airport pickup for new students for the last 8 months who arrived in Saskatoon, by encouraging community engagement in picking up students. He also organized an immigration information session, with support from the Indian Consulate General, to help students with immigration related issues. He strongly believes in the statement by Coretta Scott King; *"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members"*.

Professional Excellence Award

Zoher Rafid-Hamed

The 2022 Graduate Students' Association Professional Excellence Award is presented to Zoher Rafid-Hamed to honour his significant academic achievements in his field of study and his outstanding non-academic contributions to the School of Public Health. Zoher is a favourable member that exemplifies scholarly achievements and community involvement.



Zoher Rafid-Hamed is a current student in the Master of Public Health and Medical Doctor programs at the University of Saskatchewan. He holds a Bachelor of Science, Honours in Physiology and Pharmacology and a Bachelor of Arts and Science in Health Studies from the University of Saskatchewan. As a student researcher and public health advocate, Zoher brings a passion for health policy, health promotion, and patient safety. He has conducted public health and medical research at the local, national, and international levels focused on quality care, preventative medicine, and sustainable healthcare. Zoher's excellence in research led him to present at the International Conference on Advancements in Health Factors and Ergonomics, where he received the Best Student Paper Awards in 2020 and 2021 for manuscripts centered on quality improvement and healthcare utilization. Zoher continues to advance critical areas of public health and medicine, as he explores topics related to healthcare and multiculturalism, public health in Canada, global perspectives on healthcare, and artificial intelligence. Zoher is actively engaged in the community, holding current leadership positions as Treasurer of the American Society for Quality and Member-at-Large for the Saskatchewan Public Health Association. Zoher was recently elected as President of the Saskatchewan Medical Students' Society and looks forward to collaborating and engaging with students, faculty, and health professionals in his upcoming term. In his education and professional life, Zoher strives to bridge the gaps between public health and medicine to ensure health is sustainable, just, and equitable for all.

Research Excellence in Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, Law or Education Award

Emma Chen

The 2022 Graduate Students' Association Research Excellence in Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, Law or Education Award is presented to Emma Chen to honour the significant impacts she has made in Education and for her outstanding research results throughout her course of study. Emma has demonstrated that she is a favourable member in the research community, exemplifies scholarly achievements and has contributed to positive collaborations amongst researchers and the community.



Originally from China, Emma is an immigrant mother to two young children who are multilingual speakers of Mandarin Chinese, English, and French. Every day, Emma and her children experience and explore the unique fun (and challenges) in their lives living in a multilingual and multicultural world.

Emma worked with preschool-aged newcomer and Indigenous children and their parents/caregivers in family literacy programs at a local not-for-profit literacy organization. She also teaches Chinese language to adult learners at Confucius Institute at the University of Saskatchewan, in in-person and online environments. Emma Chen is currently a Ph.D. Candidate and Sessional Lecturer in the Department of Curriculum Studies, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, where she bridges her research with her teaching with teacher candidates.

Emma's research is theoretically grounded in raciolinguistic ideologies, translanguaging, and parent knowledge. Engaging in narrative inquiry methodology, her doctoral study focuses on immigrant parent knowledge in heritage language education in home and community settings, and strives to bring multilingual families' language practices to the centre of language teaching and learning. Emma's work is shared in national and international conferences in the fields of education and linguistics, including CSSE, AAAL, NABE, and AERA. She has published several peer-reviewed articles in journals of LEARning Landscape, International Journal of Multicultural Education, and a chapter in an edited book by Springer Nature. More of Emma's work can be found here: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9747-0604>.

Research Excellence in STEM Award

Saikat Mondal

The 2022 Graduate Students' Association Research Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math is presented to Saikat Mondal for his significant impacts in the field of science, technology, engineering or math and for the production of outstanding research results throughout his course of study. Saikat demonstrated that he is a favourable member in the research community, exemplifies scholarly achievements and has contributed to positive collaborations amongst researchers and the community.



Saikat is a Ph.D. student in the Software Research lab, USask, under the supervision of Dr. Chanchal Roy. He joined the lab back in May 2018 as a M.Sc. student. In recognition of his extraordinary research and academic performance in the M.Sc., he received the prestigious USask Graduate Thesis Award 2020 in Physical and Engineering Science, CS Research Excellence Award & Keith Geddes Award. In his Ph.D., he has demonstrated exceptional performance with high-quality, peer-reviewed publications. Recently one of his papers received Best Paper Award from ISEC-22.

He carries immense enthusiasm for serving the community. He has served in more than twenty voluntary and leadership positions and won several awards. Currently, he is serving as the President of CSGC & Social Chair, SR Lab, USask, Executive Member, KUAA, Canada. Previously, he worked as the Webmaster, IEEE Canada North-Saskatchewan-Chapter, GSA representative & VP Social of CSGC.

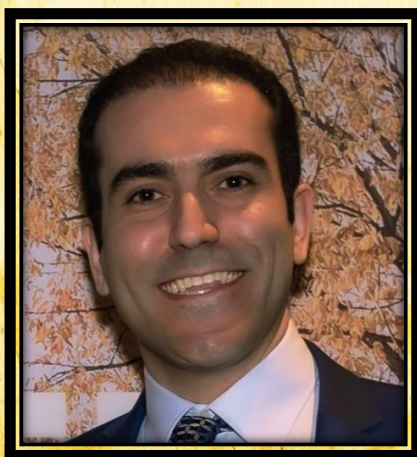
He was a full-time faculty member at Khulna University, Bangladesh and received the Best Faculty Award for excellence in teaching and research. He also worked at Samsung R&D Institute, Bangladesh and received the Best Employee & Exceptional Engineer Award for service excellence. In addition, he received the Outstanding Service Award from ICCIT-2013 and many other academic & cultural achievement awards.

His dream is to conduct cutting-edge research in Software Engineering. He consistently challenges himself with robust, emerging research problems, promoting novel, cost-effective and efficient solutions, and honing his research, development and supervision skills through continuous learning, active collaborations, and extensive self-reflection.

Mark Kroeker Exceptional Student Leadership Award

Shahab Minaei

The 2022 Graduate Students' Association Mark Kroeker Exceptional Student Leadership Award is presented to Shahab Minaei in honour of his strong leadership and exceptional initiatives, going above and beyond his call of duty, whilst carrying out the mission of the GSA. Shahab has shown outstanding involvement and collaboration with graduate students in his unit of study and across campus.



Shahab Minaei, PhD Candidate in the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering, has excelled in academia while also taking full advantage of so many opportunities at the University of Saskatchewan. Shahab was awarded the Dean's scholarship highlighting his excellent academic background. After joining the University of Saskatchewan, he has won different awards and grants recognizing his academic excellence, leadership volunteerism and community involvement. Shahab has contributed to more than 15 presented /published journal and conference papers demonstrating his profound excellence in research. He is continuously seeking learning opportunities

As a student, Shahab has served the community in different roles. He has been the President and Vice-President of the Engineering Graduate Community Council, and currently he is acting as the Community Advisor. Through this period, he has never missed an opportunity to arrange professional development workshops and social gatherings to help students with their future careers and improve the sense of community. He contributes to various groups off-campus, like Let's Talk Science and Saskatoon Open Door Society. All these extracurricular activities prove his leadership excellence, which goes above and beyond the call of duty for a student to serve his community. He never misses the chance at giving something back to the community or making a difference to the people around him. As a leader, Shahab is ready to learn, act, and move forward into the unknowable. He always says, "simplest ways to learn is to take a step, see what happens, adjust, and learn even faster!"

In Memory of Mark Kroeker

Mark Kroeker was born in Loma Linda, California on September 21, 1989 with a fatal condition known as hypoplastic left heart syndrome and underwent a cardiac transplant when he was just one week old. After recovering from transplant surgery in California for eleven months, Mark moved with his family to British Columbia where he insisted on living a completely normal life.

Mark loved school. He was always a strong student leader, and was highly involved with his community. During his final year he was a student representative on the Vancouver School Board. In high school he was very involved with the drama club and won several awards from his school and a city-wide annual event known as Vancouver Drama-Rama.



After graduating from high school, Mark went to study at Mount Allison University in Sackville, N.B. where he completed a B.A. in Geography. Mark served as VP External on the Mount Allison Students' Advisory Council for three years, and was well respected by the community as a leader.

Mark enrolled in a Masters program at the University of Saskatchewan in the department of Geography and Planning, exploring urban Aboriginal attitudes regarding city planning in Saskatoon under the supervision of Dr. Ryan Walker. As per usual, he immediately became engaged in his community, serving as President of the Geography and Planning Students' Association, and Chair of Course Council for the GSA.

Many of us who knew Mark personally are still struggling to come to terms with the enormous void in our hearts and lives left by his sudden and unexpected death in May, 2014. The award in his name to acknowledge exceptional student leadership is a very fitting and meaningful tribute to the Mark Kroeker we all remember.

Three Minute Thesis Competition

Held on Thursday April 1, 2022

The 3MT® is designed to share and celebrate the outstanding research of our dedicated students and to provide students with the opportunity to showcase the importance of their work.

Congratulations to the 2022 University of Saskatchewan 3MT® winners and honourable mention.

1st Place: Antonia Powell

2nd Place: Gaurav Malik

3rd Place: Tumpa Rani Sarker

Honourable Mention

Kaylie Krys

GSA Sustainability PHOTO-VOICE CONTEST 2022

Graduate students were invited to participate in sharing their thoughts on

‘What’s wrong with our environmental policies’

by submitting a sustainability themed photo/slogan/video/essay. Congratulations to the 2022 winners!

Photo accompanied by 50-100 word story

Andrea Gonzalez

Slogan (10-15 words)

Kacia Whilby

2-minute video or 200 word essay

Bernd Steiger

Thank you to all our faculty,
staff and administration for
supporting the successes of
our graduate students,
academically and otherwise.
Let us continue mentoring our
future leaders of tomorrow.

GSA Executives

2021-2022